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STARBURST™



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SPECIAL ISSUE

**THE MAKING OF
GHOSTBUSTERS**



**Volume 7, Number 4
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Editor:

Alan McKenzie

Assistant Editor:

Roger P. Birchall

Designer:

Steve Cook

Production:

Tim Hampson

Colour:

Cheamworth Ltd

Typesetting:

Type Generation

Distribution:

Comag

Financial Controller

James Sclater

Advertising:

Sally Benson

Publisher:

Stan Lee

Writers this issue:

John Brosnan

Chris Charles

Tony Crawley

Barry Forshaw

Sally Gary

Richard Holliss

Alan Jones

Francesca Landau

Jean-Marc Lofficier

Randy Lofficier

Frances Lynn

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COVER STORY

We present a *Starburst* spooktacular on the making of *Ghostbusters*. Starting on page 10 we devote this issue to the scary, but fun, movie that is sure to take the country by storm this Christmas. *Ghostbusters* has done incredible business in America, and to find out why Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier interview director Ivan Reitman (page 12), co-producer Michael Gross (page 16) and the technical team responsible for the film's amazing special effects (page 22). Everything you could possibly want to know about this spooky, cooky movie. So have no fear, the *Ghostbusters* are here!



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"Our Gang" and "Their Gang" might seem puerile when facetiously describing, respectively, the contemporary crop of Fantasy film makers and The Establishment.

William Friedkin, for example, is a film director who could be called "establishment", and what with films like *The Night They Raped Minsky's* and *The Boys in the Band* under his belt, this description is apt.

Winning five Oscars for his 1971 film, *The French Connection*—including Best Film and Best Direction, Friedkin's follow-up in 1973 was *The Exorcist*, which besides winning two Oscars (for Best Screenplay and Sound) was the only horror film to be nominated as Best Picture of the year.

But why was Friedkin showered with Establishment recognition—i.e., Academy Awards, while authentic horror-thriller-fantasy film directors such as George Romero, David Cronenberg, John Carpenter, Dario Argento, Tobe Hooper, Brian de Palma, etc. go unrecognized? Because Friedkin is taken "seriously" by his Hollywood peers, having helmed general entertainment films

• OPINION •

before hitting the jackpot with *The Exorcist*, a success he has, to date, not been able to repeat.

Steven Spielberg and George Lucas might be Establishment, but although their films have won Oscars (*Star Wars* won 7), and nominations for Best Picture and Best Direction, none of their films have actually won them the coveted Best Director or Best Film/Picture award.

Where once correctly described as "new wave" film-makers, Lucas, Spielberg, Coppola, Milos and co. are still regarded as "movie brats". But apart from a very few exceptions like Sam Raimi or Children of the Corn director Fritz Kiersch who have miraculously emerged from "nowhere" into the ranks of fantasy film makers, there is no totally new fresh creative talent to obliterate today's fantasy geniuses—i.e., "Our Gang" in the innovation stakes.

The Film Business, like any business is politically incestuous, and giving credence to "It's Who You

Know...". Several seemingly fresh-faced new fantasy directors have been more than successful with their new films. But on closer inspection, these talented new directors are themselves, veterans of the film industry, now directing films by virtue of association.

For example, take Nick Castle, director of the controversial film *The Last Starfighter*. He has metamorphosed into directing through his association with John Carpenter. Apart from playing *The Shape* in Carpenter's hit movie *Halloween*, he has also directed on several Carpenter films.

Scriptwriter Dan O'Bannon, famous for his *Alien* script, is due to direct *Return of the Living Dead* (not to be confused with George Romero's trilogy), a vehicle which Tobe Hooper rejected Hooper's current project is *Space Vampires* (aka, *Life Force*) scripted, curiously enough by Dan O'Bannon!

Take Joe Alves. He helmed *Jaws II*—3D, but has an impressive career

background before directing his first film. He was not only production designer on John Carpenter's *Escape From New York* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, but designed *Jaws* before working as 2nd unit director on *Jaws II*.

Romancing the Stone is directed by "newcomer" Robert Zemeckis, who through his association with Steven Spielberg and John Mills co-wrote Spielberg's 1947, and co-wrote and directed *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, which Spielberg executive-produced.

These Associates could be termed a "sub-wave" in the fantasy genre but whatever way one looks at it, may they be working for Studios or Independents, Fantasy film-makers are definitely "Our Gang".

They are more than generous when it comes to helping each other out on a creative level in relation to making Movies. "Their Gang"—The Establishment aren't so flexible in their working patterns, when it comes to helping each other out during a crisis. They weren't overtly sympathetic to now anti-establishment figure, Roman Polanski—were they?

Frances Lynn

• LETTERS •

ROMANCING FOR FREE

I have just returned from your preview of *Romancing the Stone*. Having attended the one for *Fire and Ice* a few weeks back, and finding not bad for nothing, I thought *Romancing* was absolutely excellent. I enjoyed it much more than *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. *Romancing the Stone* seemed to generate its non-stop excitement without much violence. All those bullets flying about and I saw only one man shot. It's a shame the general had his hand bitten off the way it was. *Romancing the Stone* has proved that excessive violence is not really necessary to make a film of this stature and I hope it gets the business it deserves.

Well done for bringing the preview to your readers, and if possible let's have more like it. Thanks for listening.

P.C.
Erich,
Kent.

Glad you enjoyed the movie, P.C. And while we're on the subject, we at *Starburst* would like to thank Sue Blackmore at Twentieth Century-Fox for making the preview possible.

A SATISFIED READER

First of all I must congratulate you on *Starburst* 74. I read the magazine from cover to cover (well, almost) and I was truly amazed by its quality, not to mention the two overwhelming interviews with Laurence Landon (*Rumble*) and Arnold Schwarzenegger (*Conan*). I'm glad to say I am now a fully-fledged reader of *Starburst* magazine.

Secondly, after seeing the movie *Splash*, as recommended by *Starburst*, I would like to say that the standard of acting by Daryl Hannah as Madison the mermaid was brilliant and she took on a totally different character from her role in *Blade Runner*.

Keep up the good work, *Starburst*.
Matthew Bradley,
Oldswinford,
West Midlands.

WHERE'S THE GOOD STUFF?

It never ceases to amaze me that so many really poor quality fantasy/film manage to get released on video. The low-budget, made-for-video films are the worst. Yet the good fantasy films made years ago are rarely released, for example, *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1973) and *Arabian Nights* (1942). Those that are released,



Kathleen Turner does her best to look sexy (and succeeds admirably!) in this publicity shot from *Romancing the Stone*.

such as *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) and *Ulysses* (1955) are almost never available for hire in video shops and not everyone can afford £40 or more to buy a film.

Perhaps if people complained when they found that a film they hired was rubbish, the quality of these films would eventually improve. I already know of one video shop that has returned films after complaints from the customers.

A. R. Read,
Wallasey,
Merseyside.

CHOP, CHOP!

I remember a time when the only cuts in horror films were those meted out by axe-wielding madmen. Alas, no more; the film censor has now muscled onto the scene. But before you turn the page, there is a new form of censorship more disturbing than the grease pencil, and one controlled by our own TV stations: The programme schedule.

In particular, I am referring to *The Monster Club*, which when released in 1981, was given the then "K" certificate. Yet ITV have just screened it at the ungodly hour of 10.30pm, and this is a movie once billed as "the first horror film for children". I couldn't believe that this same station had shown *The Omen*, "X" certificate, as if you needed reminding, at 9.30 less than a year

earlier. If programme planners disregard certificates, then our censors should get on with their retirements. I had hoped to see *The Thing* on tv in the near future, but I can't think of a time late enough for it to be shown. Perhaps the IBA are considering a 48-hour day?

But *Starburst* readers will have the last laugh. "ITV have just bought *Star Trek - The Motion Picture*", announced TV-am presenter Nick Owen recently, beaming his "we beat the BBC to it" smile across the nation. The punchline? Wait for the Christmas viewing figures. Auntie Beeb may be old, but she's certainly not senile.

Stephen Elsdon,
Broxbourne,
Herts.

REQUEST SPOT

As you move onwards towards issue hundred and further heights of excellence and craftsmanship, one facet of cinema persists in its absence. That area is sound effects! Visual SPFX are frequently covered yet nary a word on those noises which complete a film. So come on guys, hurry up and fill us in on these weird and wonderful sounds.

Secondly, it is true that sometime in the coming future a film of *The Prisoner* is being made? Possibly with a new actor playing the part of Number 6? Surely not! But if so who is behind this venture?

Thirdly, although I greatly enjoy John Brosnan's column couldn't he be persuaded to look on the brighter side of the cinema? Instead of continually telling us how dislikes "trekdoes", hated *Greystoke*, found *Return of the Jedi* boring, etc.

And lastly before this letter turns into a minor essay I would like to say how I enjoyed the backcovers of issues 71 and 72, more of Dr Gary! Maybe even a few of the other writers could be persuaded to reveal their faces on future backcovers! (and not just so we know who to hurt our rotten fruit at!). Congratulations to you all on an excellent magazine and happy cinema going everyone.

Paul Benwell,
Bournemouth,
Dorset.

Sounds effects? Okay. We'll look into it. Is any one else out there interested? As for the Prisoner movie, we've heard the same story. But there's been no casting details announced. We're pretty sure this project is only in the idea stage. More on that when we have it. As for John Brosnan, well, John's brief from ye Editor is to write his column in the most entertaining and thought-provoking way he knows how. And we think he's doing just that. He certainly provoked you into making a comment, didn't he? Mission accomplished, Sgt Brosnan! Carry on.

FANS GET ORGANISED

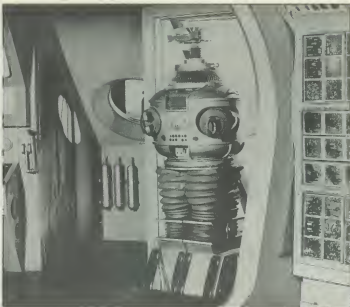
I must admit to being astonished by R. Holliss' misinformed article on media fandom in the UK (TV Zone, Starburst 72, August '84). There is a flourishing media fandom in this country, and although Orion, as a new club, may be of interest, it is absurd to suggest that it is the first of its kind.

To take the points raised in order, the *Time of Your Life* programme to which Mr Holliss refers specifically requested Anderson related costumes, and there are very few available in this country. The fans who appeared on that programme had travelled from as far away as York to appear, and the lady who insisted that "Trekkers" was the correct designation for herself is quite correct. Semantically, "Trekkie" is a derogatory American term for a young *Star Trek* fan whose addiction to the programme is total and slightly unbalanced. A "Trekker" is a mature fan of the show who usually has other interests, and whose life does not revolve 100% around a TV show. Mrs Rana is over retirement age and is most certainly of the latter variety of fan, and was quite right to insist of being addressed correctly.

Many fans hold "get-togethers" of the variety mentioned in connection with 6 of 1. I cannot see what is "looney" in choosing to visit the sites of particular interest to that show, and to choose to do so in costume - surely this is no more strange than wearing a football scarf in your team's colours to attend a game. Amongst those persons on the 6 of 1 outing mentioned was the lady who founded and runs the *Fanderson* club which Mr Holliss praised.

Mr Holliss seems to think that *Bat-Vester Galactic* has no coverage in this country. In fact, it has - and has had for some years - a thriving club dedicated to supplying merchandise and information on the show in question. The Thirteenth Tribe can be contacted via Ms Lesley Sapford, 70 The Mead, Carpenders Park, Watford, Herts WD1 8DU.

LISFAN is not the only club dedicated to Irwin Allen, either. In fact, LISFAN



Above: The Robinson's family robot aboard the Jupiter 2 from *Lost in Space*. Below left: Three of Blake's Seven (left to right) Glynnis Barber as Soelin, Steven Peay as Tarrant and Paul Darrow as Aven. Below right: Erin Gray and Gil Gerard from *Buck Rogers in 25th Century*.

concentrates on *Lost in Space*. There is a club dedicated to the entire range of Irwin Allen productions: The Irwin Allen Sci-Fi Club, Joel Eisner, 2111 East 65th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11234, USA. In the letters pages of its newsletter you will find a healthy debate as to whether LISFAN does, in fact, supply its money's-worth to its members.

Certainly *Star Trek* has much coverage in this country; there are some 12 clubs currently in existence for the show. However, I am somewhat puzzled by Mr Holliss' reference to the "Star Trek Midcon" - is this a typographical error of his, or of Orton's? There is a *Star Trek* Midcon later this year, but there hasn't been a *Star Trek* convention entitled Midcon since the

1970s, when Empathy ran one in Manchester.

There are plenty of other outlets for media fans. There are Professionals' clubs; *Starzky and Hutch* clubs; *A-Team* clubs; *Buck Rogers* clubs; *Blake's 7* clubs; clubs dedicated to various media actors and actresses - in fact, to contact one is to find the whole chain as all advertise one another freely.

There is no lack of TV show photographs, either. Mr Holliss has obviously failed to discover the sales tables at Media conventions, the media material available at Comicams across the country; the photographs offered by the various clubs; the abundance of small film still shops, particularly in city

centres - all of which cater to the media fan. Prices may vary, but the material is certainly available.

There are any number of fan publications of fiction based on a huge variety of media shows, also. Multi-media magazines are available from a number of sources, again easily ascertainable from the various media clubs.

In short, Mr Holliss has obviously only touched the tip of the iceberg. I suggest that he attempts an in-depth investigation into the thriving and quite professional media fandom in this country - I am sure that he will receive quite a surprise.

Judy Mortimer,
West Dulwich,
London.



• Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME •

The Big News this month is that *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* has been beaten out at the American box-office by Ivan Reitman's *Ghostbusters* – the film to which this special issue of *Starburst* is dedicated. Plus news of Steven Spielberg's second tv debut, and the forthcoming "V" tv series.



INDY BUSTING

The Spielberg news is both good and not so good. First, the not so hot. For the first time since 1941 in 1979, a new Spielberg release won't be No 1 for the American year. Dan Aykroyd's *Ghostbusters* has flattened *Indiana Jones*, taking more box-office dollars in ten weeks than *Doom* managed in a dozen. That furore about Indy's violence sure didn't help any. Plus the fact that *Indy* wasn't as good, as fresh, as *Raiders*. Taking the silver medal for the Olympic year shouldn't give The Man a cardiac arrest, more of a bruising for the old ego and it won't, I'm sure, dissuade Lucasfilm from going for gold a third time. Only next time, let's get back to *Indy* and real women.

E.T. = EXTRA TURN

As expected, Universal has unveiled massive re-issue plans for *E.T.* Elliott and his mate fly across the moon again from next July in North America, three years and about as many weeks after the original U.S. premiere. It's an all-stops-out re-run, treating the film like news, which explains why Universal still refuse to sell the world's most successful movie to video cassettes, cable, satellite or free-TV outlets. Whether Universal ever will sell depends on a lot on 19th July '85.



STEVEN, SWIRLBERG!

And still more news of The Man from the great swirl of activity at Spielberg HQ – Building No 477 at Universal Studios (now will you quit writing me for his address?) has announced two more movies. Is there no end to it all...?

He's producing these two, only. First, *The Goonies*, to be helmed by Superman's Richard Donner. Despite similarity in titles, it's (a) nothing to do with Spike Milligan, Major Blood-nock and Bluebottle or (b) *Gremlins*, although Chris Columbus has written the script. Steven calls it, "a young person's

adventure film for persons of all ages." He should know. He wrote the story.

Next? Well, 'twas only the other month he was in our pages explaining he wants to make a Tintin film because the kid is a great detective. He's found another one... and has signed Barry (Diner) Levinson to direct *Young Sherlock Holmes* for the Amblin label.

And that just about wraps it up, wouldn't you say? Spielberg is definitely the new Disney now, right? How long before he signs Ken Russell to make *Herbie Goes To Mars*?

DANTE'S IN FOR NOW

With *Gremlins* shooting past the \$100 million marker, Joe Dante has reached the forefront of the 'in' Hollywood film-makers. And with *Batman* on hold (producer Ivan Reitman may be duty bound to make *Ghostbusters II* first), Joe is busy shooting *E.T.*'s big rival for the '85 summertime blitz, *Explorers*. Oddly enough, although this one is about three lads making an amazing discovery which propels them, says Joe, "into a collective dream," it has nothing to do with Amblin. Script stems from a UCLA film school graduate, Eric Luke. Look out, the next generation of movie brats is here!

GOING HOME

Spielberg is also going home. Back to NBC Television for more of the stuff he helped crank out with his tele-debut for the network's *Night Gallery* in 1969. It's a series of *Amazing Stories*, a difficult title to live up to, but as he's set to produce 44 of them, I suppose he knows best. He may direct one or two, like the opener, but mainly he's leaving that door ajar for

new and young directors he wants to help. I have a feeling that *Gremlins* scribe, Chris Columbus, will be among them. There's also a rumour that Spielberg will introduce each tale, like Hitchcock re-born. If nothing else, Steven has learned that anthology material works best on the box, though *Twilight Zone – The Movie* (not to mention *The Trial* which still hasn't started) was a heckuva way to find out.

PRINCESS LUKE

Is there life after Luke Skywalker? You betcha. But then, blonds always did have more fun... Mark Hamill has been winning the reviews of his life in a Connecticut stage musical about a 19th Century song-dance team, *Harrigan 'n' Hart*, who virtually created the Broadway musical. Mark played Hart, the gay side of the team and one of the best American drag artists. *Variety's*



critic hailed his musical debut as downright remarkable. "Breathtakingly energetic, he recalls both George M. Cohan and Buster Keaton. ... Add a touch of Carol Channing when he's in a curly blonde wig." Mark is hoping to find room for the Goodspeed Opera House production on Broadway shortly. Maybe it's a good thing his Luke days are over for a while.

LIKE MAMA, LIKE. . .

Take two. Tahnee Welch is a chip off her mother's statuesque block. Mum is Raquel Welch, now 43 if you can believe it. Raquel started out in a 20th Century-Fox sf film – remember *Fantastic Voyage* (1966)? Then, she tried Europe. Tahnee, 22, has reversed the process. She's started acting in Rome and is now back in Hollywood making, what else but a 20th Century Fox sf film – *Cocoon*, directed by Ron Howard. Her co-stars include a bunch of old-timers – Hume Cronyn, Gwen Verdon, Wilford Brimley, Don Ameche, Maureen Stapleton, etc – and another offspring of a Fox star, Tyrone Power, Jr.

BOND – ON THE ROCKS

Icelanders pushed and clamoured and whipped out their autograph books. No good. Although the 16th Bond film (Cubby Broccoli's 14th, *A View To A Kill*) was definitely shooting around the icy Jokulsarlon lagoon, under Europe's biggest glacier, the 8,300 square-mile affair known as Vatnajökull in east Iceland, Roger Moore was nowhere to be found. Of course not. He was still on vacation in St. Paul de Vence, playing tennis at Antibes and eating well at La Belle Epoque at La Colle-sur-Loup.



Roger Moore, with Jane Seymour, in his first appearance as James Bond in *Live and Let Die*. He will return, once again, in *A View To A Kill*.

Stunt star Martin Grace was the only 007 in sight in Iceland, jumping niftily around on real and fake (polystyrene) ice. Cubby's boys brought one iceberg with them. Sounds silly, like taking coals to Newcastle. But this was a typically 007 gizmo. . . a submarine disguised as an iceberg. Oh, it will all make sense, eventually, even if the original Ian Fleming short story took place in France only, not far from my home in Marly-le-Roi.

Roger Moore joined the shooting at the Chantilly Chateau, near Paris – well, it's the kind of living he's grown accustomed to. After the French scenes (which include one Remy Julienne stunt cutting the latest Bond car in two), the unit moved on to San Francisco and Ascot before filming an old silver mine erected on the new, or after the fire, reconstructed – 007 Stage at Pinewood Studios by November.

ENTER: FYRINE 4

For a foreign director entrusted with his first Hollywood project, West German Wolfgang Petersen has obtained an enormous amount of control of the film, *Enemy Mine*, set on the Fyrine 4 planet in 2084. He was first asked to take over shooting from ousted director Richard Loncraine in April. I even reported he'd started work – that's usual in such strained



Noah Hathaway and the Wise Man in a scene from Wolfgang Petersen's film version of *The Never Ending Story*.

circumstances and there's been a dozen or so of dropped directors this year. The new director moves in fast while cast, crew and script are still hot, after taking maybe a week to familiarise himself with as much of everything he can. Not so, Wolfgang. He demanded five months planning. Five months? That's a delay almost unheard of in this day and age of huge interest charges on budget lolly. But he got 'em. And much more.

He couldn't begin immediately anyway as he was completing his U.S. cut of *The Never Ending Story* – shearing off seven minutes from the German release print, and adding Giorgio Moroder music. Petersen then read Edward Khmara's script of the Barry Longyear novella, checked Loncraine's rushes from Iceland – starring the *Jaws* 3 mates, Lou Gossett and Dennis Quaid – and said, quite simply, he'd have to start all over. He ruled out any more Icelandic shooting and voted for Lanzarote in the Canary Isles (the home of *One Million Years BC*) as a more weatherproof Fyrine 4. Next, he added two characters to the plot and being a pal of Spielberg's and the *Never Ending* maker, you'll be none too surprised to learn one of these is a small boy. He also insisted on his normal back-up team: cameraman Jo Vacano, designer Rolf Zehetbauer, matte artist Chris Evans, storyboarder Juan Japí – and he wanted I.L.M. for the SFX.

Although committed to using sets built in a Budapest studio, he's switching all others interiors to his home base, Munich's Bavaria Studios, where a bigger soundstage than he even used on *The Boat* and *Never Ending* has just been built. 20th Century-Fox never argued about a thing. The combine wants another big sf hit and maybe Petersen can provide it. He calls the film, "a heckuva risky script, presenting a challenging science fiction with a difference." Quaid plays an earthing crashing on Fyrine 4 and meeting Lou Gossett, unrecognisable as SFX make-up, as one of the world's most hostile enemies, the Drac. And obviously what Wolfgang Petersen didn't want to do with the Drac was to vamp it. . .

EXIT: ENDING?

Despite some input from Spielberg, Wolfgang Petersen's *Never Ending Story* looks like ending all too soon in America. It opened well enough and with some handsome reviews (the Toronto Star called it, "Indiana Jones meets Alice in Wonderland") but at the box-office, it's way behind its colossal \$38million take back home in the Fatherland. I hope that doesn't mean 20th Century-Fox will lose confidence in him and *Enemy Mine*.

TELE-FANTASY

AVOID THOSE TACKY XMAS GIFTS...



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Six Million Dollar Man creator **Kenneth Johnson** has moved into a full series format of his alien-war mini-series, *V*. (Or, in fact, two mini-series. It's just that *V*—The Final Battle wasn't.) Good news for **Marc Singer**, aka The Beastmaster and brother of Footloose lady Lori, who heads the *V* cast.

Ken, being Ken, isn't stopping there... He's also begun something called *Hot Pursuit*, which sounds very much like a re-tread of the late, great **David Janssen's** *Fugitive*, which had Americans (and the rest of us) hooked for a hundred hours from 1963-66. And even that was a bit of a rip for **Victor Hugo's** *Les Misérables*. Which leads me to a question for you... Who played the one-armed man in *The Fugitive*? C'mon now—easy. Prizes could include two pairs of ear-plugs for the tenth time you see **Indiana Jones**.



A scene from the television science fiction production, *V*, starring **Richard Herd**, **Jenny Sullivan**, **Marc Singer** and **Evan Kim**.

SUPIE II

Before dreaming too much, **Pierre Salinger** should bear in mind that not all heroes make profits. According to **Alexander Salkind**, he is some \$15million in the red after his three **Superman** films. Indeed, the second and third films were really only made to reduce the huge deficit of \$60million even after **Superman I** wound up at No 10 in our *Fantasy Film Chart*. How one film can cost so much, make so much and lose so much is a matter for a complete book. In brief, let me say the film business is into the straightest act in town, any town. I can't see that **Supergirl** will alleviate much of the debt, so a lot of **Salkind** hopes are riding on **Santa Claus** which is costing a mere \$50million to make—of which distributors have apparently already paid \$36million for the privilege (?) of releasing it.

If that doesn't work, **Salkind** will throw more (of other people's money) after bad with **Superman IV** with—or without—**Christopher Reeve**. Pointing to the **Bond** films, **Alex Salkind** inclines to the theory that it's **Supie** people buy not **Chris Reeve**. True enough. They sure don't buy him out of his **Super-longjohns**.

SF STREET

Are you ready for the most unlikely fantasy star...? He's **William Roach**, better known as **Ken Barlow** in *Coronation Street*. He's preparing a film, with the **University of the Occult** chief **Douglas Baker**, about a 16th Century healer and astrologer. The subject is really life after death, something **Roach** firmly believes in. He has to... after 24 years in the same *Street*.

LIGHTS. . !

Dan O'Bannon's selected long-time tele-cowpoke Clu Gulager, a 55-year-old mix of Cherokee and Danish stock, for top role in *Return of the Living Dead*. . . Christine's hero, John Stockwell, has begun *Survival Guide*. He could almost write it after being shut up in a nuclear shelter for 14 years in *Radioactive Dreams*. . . John Williams has settled his row with the Boston Pops Orchestra and is continuing as its conductor, after all. . . Australia entering the animation plus live action game with a low budget *Jason And The Argonauts*. Just watch the accents, okay. . . David McCallum has made his *Terminal Choice*, not too permanent, I trust. . . Sick, but true, Richard Burton's death caused a late flurry of foreign interest in buying his final film, *1984*. . . Also dead, at 56, Walter Tevis, author of *The Man Who Fell To Earth* and *The Hustler*. He'd just completed a script of his Hustler sequel, *The Colour of Money*. . .

CAMERA. . !

After five years or more of waiting for the film of Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, Tobe Hooper is now calling it, *Life Force*. . . While waiting for *Enemy Mine* to get rolling again, Lou Gossett has taped a cable-tv version of *Master Harold and The Boys* with war gamester Matthew Broderick. . . Robert Bloch's next book is *The Night of the Ripper*, so you've been warned. . . And due soon from Arthur Hailey, *Strong Medicine*. . . Elliott's mum, Dee Wallace, joins Jamie Lee's dad, Tony Curtis, in *King of the City*, the new one from Norman Thaddeus Vane. . . Jedi-Maker Richard Marquand goes to court in *Hearts of Fire*. . . Christine's boyfriend Keith Gordon, into tv's *Singles Bars*, based on Dolly Parton's song. T'other singles include *Starsky*, aka Paul Michael Glaser and ex-Charlie's Angel, Shelley Hack. . . Space 1999-er Martin Landau has taken the *Dracula* play back on the road in America - literally.

& AKK-SHUN

As expected, if a trifle uninspired, Conan's mate, Sandahl Bergman, now waging war as *Red Sonja*. Well, Laurene London had done it already as *Hundra*. So has Sandahl as *Valeria*.



Sandahl Bergman, as she appeared in Conan the Barbarian, soon to be seen as *Red Sonja*.

no? . . . BBC-tv has bought *Greystoke* and Richard Marquand's *Eye of the Needle*. . . Ex-actio Zalman King (remember *Blue Sunshine*?) did some uncredited work on the *Never Say Never* Again script, but wins all the credit (and bomb-blasts to come) for Kim Basinger's intensely erotic *9½ Weeks*. . . Ron Howard can write his own ticket for any future Disney movie. His *Splash* has saved the slowly sinking studio from financial disaster. . . *Excalibur*'s King Arthur, Nigel Terry, ridden off down-under for *Sylvia*. . . Michael Lindsay, alias *Moonraker*, causes Michael Caine much grief in *The Holcroft Covenant*, which has to be a Robert Ludlum book with a title like that. . . I prefer Canadian tv's satire on the (not so distant) future. It's called *Overdrawn At The Memory Bank*. . .

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INTRODUCTION

"**G**hosts remind me of men's smart crack about women, you can't live with them and you can't live without them." Although the ghosts in Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* (1932) are mental ones, the supernatural kind have always been a favourite subject in the movies. Whether they have been portrayed as frightening, as in *Ghost Story* (1981) and *Poltergeist* (1982), romantic figures, as in *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* (1947) and *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1978), or even as the focus of comedy, such as in *Topper* (1937) and *Ghost Breakers* (1940), a good ghost story is always a welcome diversion.

Ghostbusters could definitely be said to have its origins in the latter category. The previous credits of Michael Gross, Associate Producer on the film, include the comedy television series, *Second City Television* and the *National Lampoon* magazine. Gross was also involved with director Ivan Reitman on the *Heavy Metal* movie (1981). He sees *Ghostbusters* as a revival of the comedy/horror genre of the 1930s and 1940s.

Ghostbusters had its beginnings in the fertile mind of comedian/writer Dan Aykroyd. One of the original stars of the television show NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, Aykroyd's film career includes such comedies as Steven Spielberg's *1941* (1979), John Landis' *The Blues Brothers* (1980) and *Trading Places* (1983), *Neighbors* (1982), *Dr Detroit*, and a role in *Twilight Zone: The Movie*. Aykroyd had previously worked with Ivan Reitman in Canada in a television show produced and directed by Reitman, *Grease*.

Aykroyd wrote a first draft screenplay and showed it to longtime friend and fellow *Saturday Night Live* alumnus, Bill Murray. Murray's first feature film role was in *Meatballs* (1979), which had been directed by Ivan Reitman and co-written by Harold Ramis. Murray also starred in *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Caddyshack* (1980), also co-written and directed by Ramis, and *Stripes* (1981), which co-starred Ramis and was directed by Reitman.

It is therefore not surprising that, when Aykroyd and Murray looked for a director, they decided to contact Ivan Reitman. It was Reitman who was instrumental in shifting the emphasis from the pure fantasy of Aykroyd's original concept, to broader and wilder comedy. It was also at Reitman's suggestion that Harold Ramis became involved as a writer and actor in the film. Ramis, in addition to the above-mentioned credits, co-wrote *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), and directed another *Saturday Night Live* alumnus, Chevy Chase, in the recent *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983).

Once Ramis was involved in the project, the writers went off to Martha's Vineyard where, in the space of two months, a final draft of *Ghostbusters* was completed. Reitman had approached Columbia with the project in May of 1983. By June, the film was set to go, and Michael Gross was hired on. The only problem was, that the studio insisted the film be ready for an early summer 1984 release, in order to be in American theatres well before the Olympic games.

The story, as developed, concerns a trio of Columbia University scientists, the womanising Venkman (Murray), the money-hungry Stantz (Aykroyd) and the maniacal Spengler (Ramis), who are expelled from academia and set out to open their own business - hunting ghosts in New York City. The script included a plethora of special effects, such as the representations of the various ghosts and demons, the sophisticated weaponry used by the *Ghostbusters*, and a climactic battle with an extra-dimensional demon, named Gozer, who conjures up a 112 foot tall marshmallow man (the "Stay-Puft Man"!).

The casting of the film was completed with the addition of beautiful Sigourney Weaver, as Dana, a New York girl who lives in a building which is in reality the temple of Gozer, and whose refrigerator contains a doorway into Gozer's dimension. Sigourney Weaver's credits include Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979), Peter Yates' *Eyewitness* (1981, UK title: *The Janitor*) and Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1983). The cast also includes Ernie Hudson as Winston, an extra *Ghostbuster* hired when business is booming, and Rick Moranis as Louis, Dana's unfortunate neighbour. Hudson's recent films include *Spacehunter* and *Two of a Kind*. Moranis is one of the famed McKenzie Brothers from Second City Television.

On the technical side, in addition to the skills of Richard Edlund's newly-established B.F.C. special effects facility, which was selected to handle the considerable work of putting together the almost 200 effects shots required in the film, *Ghostbusters* was fortunate to enlist the talents of John De Cuir as Production Designer. De Cuir, who has been in the business since the 1940s, has won Academy Awards for *The King and I* (1956) and *Cleopatra* (1963). His other films include *Hello Dolly* (1969), *The Other Side of Midnight* (1977) and *Steve Martin's Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982). De Cuir's most difficult task on *Ghostbusters* was the designing of the "Gozer Temple" set on Sound Stage 16 at the Burbank Studios. This set, which was 60 feet tall, covered the entire stage, and cost over \$1 million! It represented the top of a New York apartment building and was surrounded by a back-lit, 360 degree, panoramic, New York skyline backdrop.

In this special *Ghostbusters* issue of *Starburst*, compiled and written by our Hollywood correspondents Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier, we'll be looking at the making of the movie, through interviews with the director Ivan Reitman, associate producer Michael Gross and just about the whole special effects team, headed by Richard Edlund who has also worked on such movies as *Star Wars* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

GHOSTBUSTERS (1984)

Bill Murray (as Dr Peter Venkman), Dan Aykroyd (Dr Raymond Stantz), Sigourney Weaver (Dana Barrett), Harold Ramis (Dr Egon Spengler), Rick Moranis (Louis Tully), Annie Potts (Janine Melnitz), William Atherton (Walter Peck), Ernie Hudson (Winston Zeddemore), David Margulies (The Mayor), Steven Tash (Male Student), Jennifer Runyon (Female Student), Slavtiza Jovan (Gozer), Michael Ensign (Hotel Manager), Alice Drummond (Librarian), Jordan Charney (Dean Yeager), Timothy Carhart (Violinist), John Rothman (Library Administrator), Tom McDermott (Archbishop), Ruth Oliver (Library Ghost), Kim Herrin (Dream Ghost).

Directed by Ivan Reitman. Screenplay by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis. Photographed by Lazlo Kovacs. Production design by John De Cuir. Edited by Sheldon Kahn and David Blewitt. Visual Effects by Richard Edlund. Music by Elmer Bernstein. Associate producers Joe Medjuck and Michael Gross. Produced by Ivan Reitman.

Time: 105 mins

Cert PG

We wish to acknowledge the help of Unit Publicist Nancy Wilton and Associate Producer Michael Gross. Without their kind assistance, this dossier would not have been possible.

THE MAKING OF GHOSTBUSTERS

by Randy & Jean-Marc Lofficier



INTERVIEW

IVAN REITMAN, DIRECTOR

Ivan Reitman has had a multi-faceted career, with achievements in motion picture and television production, direction and writing. A native Czech whose family fled to Canada when he was 4, Reitman's entertainment career was launched after winning a prize in a national student competition for the Canadian Bicentennial. As a student, Reitman had also directed and produced several plays that aired on Canadian television.

Reitman first met with Dan Aykroyd when he produced a live television variety show, entitled *Greed*. Shortly thereafter, he produced *Spellbound* for the Toronto stage, which evolved into *The Magic Show*, a five-year hit on Broadway. After *The Magic Show*,



Reitman produced another Broadway show, based on *National Lampoon* magazine. The success of this production enabled Reitman to become acquainted with the magazine, and eventually led to the production of *Animal House* in 1978, starring John Belushi.

Reitman followed *Animal House* with *Meatballs* and *Stripes*, both starring Bill Murray. Reitman directed *Meatballs*, co-written by Harold Ramis, who also co-starred in *Stripes*. Then, in 1981, Reitman produced the animated SF fantasy picture, *Heavy Metal*. This year, in addition to *Ghostbusters* which once again reunites Murray, Aykroyd and Ramis, Reitman also produced and directed a musical magic show, entitled *Merlin*.

Starburst: When did you first get involved with *Ghostbusters*?

Ivan REITMAN: Dan Aykroyd had written a script called *Ghostbusters*, and showed it to Bill Murray. They liked it and they decided that I would be the director for the movie. They sent the script to me, and I didn't like it at all. I sort of hemmed and hawed about it, then I sat down with Danny and started discussing what I thought we should do with it. He really liked the ideas. I also suggested that we get Harold Ramis involved as a writer and an actor in the film. That was last May. So, we started all over again, using his draft really for certain incidents and characterisations. We really redid it pretty well from scratch.

We worked all summer. Bill Murray came back from shooting *The*

Razor's Edge in France, and we started shooting in October. It's not the fastest film I've ever been involved in, but considering the size of the production it's pretty remarkable.

How much of the original script is still there?

A lot of it is the kind of business that they're in. Two of the major incidents in the film were originally in that script, but reworked for the plot that we developed. His movie would have cost \$200 million to make, it was more of a science fiction extravaganza than a comedy. I wanted to make a comedy that also had science fiction stuff and neat effects in it. But, I felt that the weight had to be on the characterisations and the comedy, rather than the other way around, which was his script. I made it much more realistic, also in the process. I influenced its realism. They're the writers, and they did all the writing.

Was there any resistance about changing it?

No. Once Danny and I finally sat down face to face and talked about it, he was the most excited advocate. He couldn't wait and he seemed very appreciative of the whole development of it.

After you got Harold Ramis in on the script, how long did it take from the time you started changing things around until you had a completed script ready to go?

That first draft took about a month or five weeks. We went off to Martha's Vineyard, stayed there two weeks and did another draft.

Left: Ivan Reitman (this side of the camera) directs an early scene in the film outside the University where the Ghostbusters work. Below left: Hordes of ghosts and demons erupt from Ghostbusters HQ and swirl across the New York skyline. Right: The on-screen ghost is intercepted by the Ghostbusters in the remains of a makeshift meal. Below: The Ghostbusters symbol. Below right: Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) is buffeted by the elements as the "Gooner" builds away over New York.



Then, we did another draft after that, that took two or three weeks. We did three drafts in the space of two months.

Were there significant changes from one to the next?

It was clearer where the movie was going with each draft and what the character differentiation was amongst the three of them. What the major plot incidents should be. That kept on shifting around. The science line became clearer.

While you were doing the script, were you thinking in terms of what the special effects would entail?

Yes. But we knew that we were going to be in real trouble, time-wise. Right away, the studio was saying, "We need this for next summer." And it was already less than a year away. Michael Gross contacted Richard Edlund, who we had heard was going to leave Industrial Light & Magic and set up a company here. I met him to find out what his plans were—I think this was already in June of last year—and he said it was true.

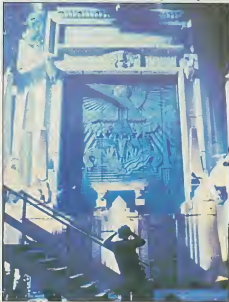
What about the trials and tribulations of closing off Central Park for a week when you went on location in New York?

They weren't happy about that at all. They felt that didn't have a good location manager. We should have been talked out of the location that we ended up choosing. It was right in the middle of three very important arteries. Quite apart from the Central Park West, which is a





Above: Ghostbusters! Dr Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), Dr Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and Dr Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis) pose for a commercial before their New York centre of operations. Below: The massive set for the rooftop Temple of Gozer, where the Ghostbusters make their last stand. Right: Chees reigns at the foot of Dana Barrett's apartment building (which also houses the Temple) as the supernatural forces gather strength.



north-south flowing... that was relatively easy to close. It was the east-west, crosstown traffic, flowing through 54th, 61st and 67th, right in the area where we were shooting. We had blocked those up too and one Friday night we apparently gridlocked Manhattan Island for about an hour.

Didn't the Film Commission try to talk you out of shooting there? Yes, they did. But by then it was too late, because we were deep into the building the big set that matched the exteriors, and there was a lot of other money spent, specifically for that building.

Why did you decide to build such a massive set for the rooftop scene? John De Cuir, the production designer, is the last of the grand masters. It was appropriate to the story. For the confrontation, basically we needed... I guess we could have built half of a rooftop, and sort of tried to play the action that way. But it wasn't that great a saving. Once you've built the scaffolding and everything, for the extra ten percent, you might as well go the rest of the way.

What sort of problems did the size of the set cause you? Well, we couldn't shoot at just any angle, but we had a fair amount of freedom. It was also so big, that it took forever to light. I think there are only 12 Titans (lights) existing in the world, and we used ten of them on the stage. During certain key scenes, no other filming could take place on the Burbank lot! So, we tried to do it during the Christmas break time, and we scheduled carefully those days, so it would occur when there was no other filming. I think the last time this kind of power



Left: *Ghostbusters* producer/director Ivan Reitman on location with the cast and crew in Manhattan. Above: Sigourney Weaver plays Dana Barrett, a New York musician who is selected from millions to be the emissary of Gozer known as the Gate Keeper.

was used was for the big set on *Close Encounters*, when the mothership landed.

How did it strike you, when you read the script, that your major antagonist in this film was going to be a giant marshmallow?

It was what worried me, because the film was very realistic until that point. As long as you accepted the theory as it developed, each thing led to the other quite naturally, and that's where it suddenly took a left turn and went way beyond. I kept on worrying that it might not work. And, going into filming I still thought that it might not work. Now that I've seen it, I think it works, but I won't be able to tell until I've seen it all complete.

Did you have as a contingency plan in case it didn't work?

The reason it stayed was because we couldn't come up with anything that sounded as good. It's part of the risks of film making!

Do you think that having to be a part of setting up a new special effects facility made your job more difficult?

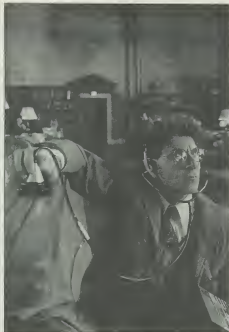
I think it made Richard Edlund's job more difficult. He had to build a company and get it up to working speed. They've only hit their stride about a month ago, so it put them into a terrible crunch, getting this film ready. For us, it's a problem because it means we're rushed in terms of getting some of the effects done. There's 195 effects shots in the film at this moment. And, it was more expensive as a result of a lot of it going into the physical set up, as opposed to into the movie itself. *What are you doing about scoring, since the film isn't yet finished?*

Elmer Bernstein started looking at footage in December, while we were still filming. We had reels cut together before we finished filming. He's been working on it, and he's now into it very heavily.

You're editing the film, yet the special effects aren't done. Is that a problem for you?

Yeah! We have these sort of black and white slugs all over the place. They have just a plate or some crude line drawings in them. But one thing I learned from *Heavy Metal* and from *Spacehunter* to a certain extent is that the film better work without the special effects or you can forget it. Whatever inadequacies we felt in the work prints of both *Spacehunter* and *Heavy Metal* didn't disappear when the film was completed. Even though we always told ourselves that, "Well, *Spacehunter* will work better once we actually see it in 3-D, and it's all together with the effects." Or for *Heavy Metal*, "Once all the colour and effects are in it will work better." But, it didn't. It worked basically just the way it did only it was more polished.

I screened *Ghostbusters* in its rough state, without any effects at all, except the mechanical ones that we did on set, to small audiences just to see. I figured it was going to have to work as it is. It will only get better, but it better work right now. Fortunately, it did. I found I'm no longer relying on the inclusion of everything to save me. My approach was that it's got to work as a movie without anything in its roughest form without special effects, audio effects, proper colour balancing or music. If it works then, you know it's going to work. ■



INTERVIEW

MICHAEL GROSS ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Starburst: Could you go over your background?

Michael GROSS: Basically, it's a design background. I went to Pratt as an illustrator/artist. When I was a teenager I used to make home movies with Don Shay*. We did movies together when we were fifteen years old, monster movies, creatures in caves, all the stuff we're doing now! It was a lot cheaper then.

I was the first art director of *National Lampoon* magazine for its first five years. Of course, Bill Murray and Ivan did films for *National Lampoon*. Ivan knew Den Aykroyd from back in Canada, years ago, when he had produced a television show. Then, Ivan produced a *National Lampoon* off-Broadway show, called *The National Lampoon Show*, which had Bill and Bill's brother in it, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, all of what became the *Saturday Night Live* people. And I was at the *Lampoon* at the time. So I knew all those guys. At that point, I also met Ivan, briefly.

I stayed in magazines and did some other things. When I was in New York I had my own design firm and I was also doing some television work and producing small, basically museum and industrial films. I gave up on print finally. I just decided that magazines were dying, books were limited for what my involvement was, so I left New York to come here to make films.

Because *Heavy Metal* was a sister publication to *National Lampoon*, I was involved in their early plans to make a film out of it while I was in New York. The *Heavy Metal* film project was then taken to Ivan. He wanted to do it, and raised the money in Canada. I got involved in it. I was the production designer on it, but I was also the associate producer. Ivan thought that his involvement as a producer would be picked up a little more by the other producer, but it wasn't. We also had a weak director, frankly. We found ourselves in a position where Ivan was also doing *Stripes*, and *Heavy Metal* had to get done. So, my responsibilities increased until I was really functioning as line producer on the thing, as well as the production designer.

Ivan and I have worked together mostly ever since, but I've been off doing other things. I was with the *Second City Television* show. I have an Emmy nomination for my design work for that. I've done other projects in between, but basically, I keep coming back and working with Ivan.

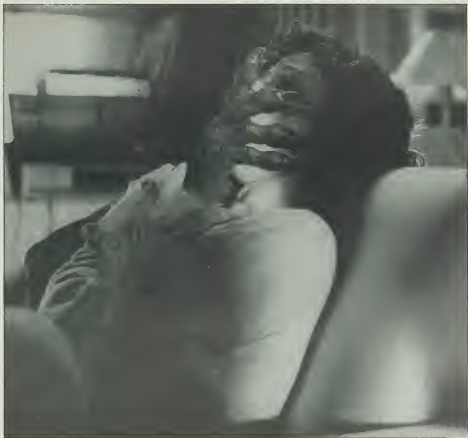
What was the first thing that you did on *Ghostbusters* when you started?

There are two associate producers on the picture, Joe Medjuck and myself. We tend to separate our duties for Ivan. Mine are almost exclusively in the area of design and special effects.

Once an art director is on, he has the responsibility for sets and the look of the movie on a large scale. John De Cuir is a great man. He had no problems understanding that I would also have a lot of input on the design of the creatures, etc. . . It all comes to what Ivan and I both call a kind of contemporary science-fiction, indoor humour sensibility, that is very hard to find if you just plug into people already in the film business. There's a contemporary thing going on that was reflected in *Heavy Metal*, in the *National Lampoon* and in other places, which doesn't involve an entire industry. It's a sensibility. Ivan and I share that sensibility, and he trusts me.

So, if you were to take a lot of people in the film business and ask them to design ghosts, you could be a long time getting there. So what I immediately did was to put together a number of designers. We had some design work that had been done out of the country, in Canada, and we just started putting concepts together. What do the ghosts look like? What does a Terror Dog look like? What is this creature we're talking about? And, of course the script was changing as fast as we could even work on it. But it was just to try and conceptualise what all this was about.

* Now the editor of *Cinefix*.



Then, we had to start storyboarding immediately. The biggest immediate problem, obviously, was that we knew we had a range of special effects that were so large and extraordinary, and such a short amount of time to do them. The problem was, where were we going to go with it? L.L.M. couldn't take us. At that time, *Dune* was at Apogee, and not only that, but it looked like *Dune* was going to spread itself all over town... We could have gone to people like Dreamquest, for whom I have a great deal of respect, but they really weren't big enough to take on a project of this scale. And, they were the first to recognise that there were effects in this film that, although they could have done them, it would have been the first time they were doing them. We also just didn't know how much research and development there was going to be... So, we just didn't have the time.

It was at that point that someone came to me and said I should talk to Richard Edlund, because he was leaving L.L.M. and setting up his own shop down here. So, I talked to him, gave him a script, and it all fell right into place. What happened then is that the shop that Edlund set up here is being financed by Columbia and MGM/UA jointly, to do *Ghostbusters* and *2010*. But, if that hadn't happened, where would we have gone? I don't know. Frankly, there's a good chance that we would not have been able to make the film, at least not on time.

We then had the added benefit that a lot of the people that work for Edlund had worked for him in the past on other films, including *Poopergeist*. The advantage of having people like John Bruno, for

example, who have literally handled ghosts before, was a great benefit. Ironically, now, in the cut of the picture, we have removed most of the ghosts.

Tell us more about the designs of the various ghosts

While the script was metamorphosing, we had to decide what these things would look like. It's easy to talk about a ghost, but then you say you want an original ghost... For example, in the film, we have this thing called Onion Head, which is not a guy running around with a big onion for a head, but is a ghost. So we had to decide on what he would be like.

Another example, the Terror Dogs. At one point the Terror Dogs were dogs that were something running from Gozer's dimension. They were big, buffoon-like, silly, almost loveable animals. Not really loveable, because they were monsters, but stupid, drooling like demented dogs! Then, at another point, they were almost skeletal. But it wasn't until we reached the point in the script when we realised that these dogs were coming here with a purpose – to devour these people – that the concept solidified. But, it solidified in the midst of a schedule that was so difficult that we were actually putting together the effects people to construct it as we were still trying to decide what it was. That kind of race was constant.

What about the storyboards? That was obviously going on at the same time...

Yes. Again, we had to start storyboarding early, just to get the scenes locked down. We were storyboarding even before we got the effects people on, which is not a great thing to do! It helps the director and everybody else to see just what the scene might be, but really the effects people have to do the storyboarding, because what they do, in effect, is storyboard what they know they can produce.

Opposite top: Dr Egon Spengler (Herold Remick) checks out a New York library for signs of a haunting. Opposite below: The Ghostbusters pose by the Ghostbusters-mobile. Above: Bad times for Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) as the minions of Gozer take her captive.



Then, John Bruno came on. We had wanted him on early, but he was in France, working on Cheech and Chong's *Corsican Brothers* film. By the time he got over here, we had half of the film 'boarded already. So, he had to go re-board ninety percent of that, as well as 'board some original stuff that hadn't yet been done. There was some advantage to this, however. For instance, he was given a scene that played in a way that we liked already, so it didn't have to be totally conceived and thought of from scratch. It was just a matter of fixing it to make it work. So, we didn't lose by starting early. We did, in fact, gain because it enabled us to lay a scene down in front of Ivan so that he could see it. He cut some things, because he looked at it and decided he didn't really need them.

A lot of the special effects work that was in the first draft of the script remained unchanged in the last two drafts. But some sequences were rearranged around. A character was added, other characters were changed, but the effects scenes, a lot of them, isolated as they were, remained in the film unchanged. So, a lot of that boarding, even with the changes, wasn't lost.

What about reconciling the fact that the film is a funny and a scary film at the same time? That's an odd combination of elements to have to deal with.

That's a good question, because that is the single hardest problem of the whole film. Scary-silly. . . I can only think of twice having to deal with that in a film. As a genre, sometimes in the Thirties and Forties,



you had *Hold that Ghost*, *Ghostbreakers* and all the rest of it. In these films, you relied on the horror movie cliché for the scary part, and then you played the humour against it.

That kind of thinking died away, certainly in the late Fifties and didn't exist at all in the Sixties. Then, Landis came back with *An American Werewolf in London*, in an entirely different way, certainly a drier, wrier, bizarre humour, and horror that was truly scary, to the point where either it was brilliant and you loved it, or you hated it. I sat with audiences that were confused as to whether they should be laughing or screaming, and maybe that was his point as well.

We don't have that problem with *Ghostbusters*. We've clearly made up our minds with this film. It's a comedy — broad, big, bold. This is much closer to the Forties way of thinking about it, but with contemporary sensibilities, humour, talents, and a contemporary way of looking at horror. The only exception to that is, that we don't do what a lot of contemporary horror films do, and that is we don't repulse you. It's more a fun film, like the Forties'. There's no blood, there's no people turning inside out. We don't want to put things on the screen that people can't look at.

The Onion Head ghost is funny. And so is the Marshmallow creature in a weird sort of way.

Well, the Onion Head ghost is a clear exception to this, because we decided to make him a funny ghost from the start. And, even then, we certainly didn't want to make him like Casper. We had to make him something else. We think he works in the sensibility of the film.

As regards the Stay-Puft Marshmallow man, that concept was in Dan's original script. All the way along, we kept asking people, "Do you think this is over the edge?" As we got closer and closer to it, I now think it is brilliant. I think it's just the perfect touch to end the whole movie. It would have been so embarrassing to walk any kind of real monster up that street. You would have had *Godzilla*, which you can't

take seriously anyway. But, at the same time, it walks a line because it has to be threatening, in a kind of ironic sort of way. So you can't have a Thanksgiving Day parade balloon come up the street. It just walks a very, strange fine line. It does work conceptually in the script, and I think it does visually, the way we've produced it.

The Stay-Puft Man would have been ruined entirely, in my opinion, if he ever did a funny take. Or if somebody did something silly with him. He has to maintain a very straight, purposeful path through this. One of the problems that we're having at the effects end, is that a lot of the puppeteers, having had the flood gates opened with the Onion Head ghost, are just overdoing him now. . . . It came out a little too buffoonish, too broad, too silly. So we're having to go back and calm it down a little.

Opposite: Dene Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) is possessed by the will of Gester, a terrifying demon who plans to destroy the world, starting with Manhattan. Top: The physical form of Gester (Sylvester Jovan) confronts the Ghostbusters. Right: Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and Winston (Ernie Hudson) arrive too late to stop the captured phantoms being released from *Ghostbusters HO*.





► **What were some of the problems encountered in shooting in New York?**

One of the more amazing feats accomplished in this film was a "stunt" put together by Chuck Gaspar, who does the physical effects, and by John De Cuir, who designed it. They worked out something that's really spectacular. But, it made working in New York quite difficult. . . That "stunt" deals with a scene in which the boys fall into a hole in the ground in front of the Gozer building in New York City. Obviously, we couldn't dig a hole in the streets of New York, although John De Cuir wanted to! So, for a couple hundred thousand dollars, we worked out a great "stunt".

When the guys rise up out of the hole, as well as when there are people screaming in the streets, what you actually see is tremendous rubble in front of the building. The asphalt is torn up, at extreme angles. There is a police car in the hole, steam pipes are coming out, etc. . . Well, we couldn't go into the street to shoot this, so all that was built on top of the real street! The street is still there, of course, and there are fake pieces of it, all cut at strategic angles, to cover the fact that there is no hole in it. The automobile is cut in half and tilted up at that angle. . .

So, now, at one point in the film, you see the ground open up, and you see the hole, and you see the guys fall down in the hole. That was all a recreation of the front of the building and the street, built over here on the Columbia Ranch, and which could only be shot in a limited number of ways. We dug a hole in the ground, and Chuck Gaspar rigged a street that is hydraulically controlled to collapse. So, the pieces just split and collapse, and everything falls right into it, stunt car, stunt men, etc. . . The steam pipes pop up. . . When you intercut it with the stuff we shot in New York, you can't tell that it's not there. *What about some of the other problems of shooting in New York, such as closing off Central Park?*

Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), fast-talking University lecturer, lines up a date with a pretty but glibble student (Jennifer Runyon).

Mostly traffic problems. New York is a city that is already congested to the limit, and when you take Central Park West and you close down everything but one lane, and it leaves only 69th Street, which is a transverse that runs through the park, and that's already slowed down to a halt - you've tied up a third of Manhattan all the while you're shooting. We even shot through Friday rush hour once.

The hotel where we were staying was down the street from where we were shooting. I remember walking down at the end of one shooting day and hearing car horns beeping from as far away as the low Fifties. I went into the bar of the hotel, and sat down to have a beer. I had a button on my coat which was one of our crew buttons, so we could be identified in the masses. This guy came in and said, "Jesus Christ! Two and a half hours to get from Thirtieth Street to here! What the hell is going on up there!" Some other guy jumps up at the bar and says, "A bunch of sons of b... are making a movie! They're screwing up half the town, making a g-d movie!" So, I took my button off, stuck it in my pocket and hid it. Normally, you'd be in a place like that, kind of proud that you're making a film, but not us! I wasn't going to say a word! At one point, some guy asked me what I do, and I said I worked for a subsidiary of Coca Cola!

But, the press treated us very well, and most people had a really good time. People do like to see a movie shot. . . and the New York extras were fabulous. It was difficult only because we were on the streets the whole time. I can't think of a single outrageous anecdote, however. We only shot there about three and a half weeks. We had Central Park closed off for a week. There was a point, when we were coming to our last day, when we went to one of the cops who headed the group of patrolmen that we had on the film, and he said, "We may need to shoot another half day, a Saturday." He said, "No, you're not. It's over, you're wrapping at 11.30 tonight." They were great, but it was tough on everybody.

*** Columbia, who is producing Ghostbusters, is a subsidiary of the Coca-Cola company.**

GHOSTBUSTERS SPFX



Because of the large quantity of special effects required by the story — almost 200 shots — and the pressure of a very short production schedule, *Ghostbusters* could have turned into what industry people sometimes refer to as a “nightmare”. Yet, the film was delivered on time, although not without its normal share of crises and problems.

ENTER: EDLUND

The story of the special effects of *Ghostbusters* is, coincidentally, also that of the first film made by B.F.C., a new special effects house set up by Academy Award winner Richard Edlund. Very early on, a team of designers had started work, storyboarding the film. Meanwhile, the production had gone looking for a special effects house that could handle the sheer volume of work in the prescribed period of time. They were delighted to find that Richard Edlund had left George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic SPFX company in San Rafael, to form his own effects facility in the Los Angeles area.

“I had spent a great deal of time under the Lucasfilm umbrella,” says Edlund, whose credits include the *Star Wars* films, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Porky's*. “I wanted to go out and get wet myself. I felt that, once I had finished *Jedi*, my job was essentially done. Some opportunities began to present themselves down in L.A. There were a number of close friends and working associates who also felt the need to change their situations, so we mutually decided to come down here.”

Edlund had maintained an “ongoing communication” with Douglas Trumbull since the days of *Star Wars*. Aware that Trumbull wanted to direct pictures (as evidenced by his recent *Brainstorm*), and that Trumbull's partner, Richard Yurich, wanted to become a Director of Photography in features, Edlund went into partnership with the two men. He and his friends moved into the premises of Trumbull's and Yurich's Venice-based E.E.G. “We're partners in this operation now, from the standpoint of the facility and the equipment,” Edlund explains. “But the people who are working with me here are an intact group.” They renamed the company B.F.C.

Left: Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) and Dana Barrett (Sophtourney Werwer) hugging in there after the battle with the Stay Puff Man. Right: The Ghostbusters hold the Stay Puff Man at bay with their anti-ghost guns. Below left: Gunfight at the Temple of Gozer. Spengler (Ravard Ramis), Stantz (Dow Aykroyd), Venkman and Zeddemore (Eric Hudson) blast the demon. Below centre: Slaviczo Jovan as the physical form of the demon Gozer and a Terror Dog Inroad. Below right: Dostoy Aykroyd as the bungling Dr Kaponzo Stantz.



TOOLING UP FOR GHOSTBUSTERS

Early on, Edlund decided that B.F.C. would do most of its work in the 65mm format. He explains, "I sort of resurrected Vistavision" on *Star Wars*. Vistavision is a good format, in that you can use spherical lenses and work with a reduction when you composite. When you do that, you always have a generation (quality) loss. By reducing in composite, you minimise that generation loss."

One of the first things that Edlund and his team did, was to either build new equipment, or modify that which was already in place. "I'm not the type of person that has to have all the equipment in hand, in order to do anything. I can build up the equipment and get it all ready to go. That's what we've done here. We have different ways of working than Douglas and Richard. We had to build a 65mm aerial head, optical printer", which was a first priority. We built a magnificent printer, and I think it's the best one yet. It's the third one that I've built, basically from scratch. The quality of the dupes are the best that I've ever seen. We built it with a huge casting of ductal iron, so that it's

solid as a rock. We can have an earthquake and not miss a frame.

"We put optics on the other two printers that were here. I also brought my 35mm printer in, so that we have 35mm capability as well. Then, the other main achievement is the high-speed, 65mm reflex camera built by Gene Whiteman (Whiteman was Equipment Supervising Engineer on *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Return of the Jedi*). He also designed the optical printer used on *E.T.*). It's the only spinning mirror reflex 65mm camera that I know of. It's the only 65mm camera that will run over 100 frames a second. We'll have it up to 120 pretty quick, and have had up to 105 so far. I think we can probably get it faster than that, but we just don't want to mess around with it – we don't have time to finesse that last 15 frames a second at this point. The camera is in such demand every day that it's scheduled from shot to shot. We finish one and it's on to the next."

B.F.C.'s start-up was financed jointly by Columbia and MGM/UA to handle the effects on both *Ghostbusters* and *2010*. "The theory here," Edlund continues, "is to have two projects all the time, one of which releases about six months after the other one. That would be the ideal working situation for us as a group, because I find that to have more ▶



Above: The Demon Gazer (Sivette Joven). Centre, top to bottom: *Ghostbusters* Special Effects! The Temple of Gazer, atop Dana's apartment building, is charged with elemental energy. Louie Tully (Rick Moranis/Land Dena Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) as Gazer's chosen disciples, absorb the power of Gazer. The *Ghostbusters* wearily enter the inner chamber of Gazer's Temple. Far right top: A Terror Dog, one of Gazer's emissaries. Bottom right: After the climactic battle with the forces of Darkness, Venkman (Billy Murray) helps Dana away from the carport. Bottom far right: Time enough for Love when New York is safe once more.

► than one project focusing on the same date, in the same house, really causes pandemonium. That way, too, the different departments can segue from project to project, and maintain a continuity of effort over a period of time. I would not want, all of a sudden, to run out of things to do around here, because then you have the prospect of losing this marvelous chemistry of personality and talent."

This blending of people is, to Edlund, the most important aspect of a top-quality effects facility. He feels that the enthusiasm generated by his team has added to their creativity. "I have a 'Hunting Band' theory," says Edlund. "There is a core group of twenty or so people here that all have a good inner relationship. Some of them come with me and others, whom I've known for years were already here. When you have that kind of situation, then you have control of the whole, because everyone within the Hunting Band is going after the same goal. I guess my main function is to go through and talk to all these people, make sure that everything is all right, see what people are doing, maybe making suggestions or listening to suggestions from others. Then, when we all get together in the screening room on a project, everyone gets to understand and come up with a suggestion

for something that doesn't have to do with their speciality." Richard Kerrigan, Production Supervisor, whose credits include Effects Production Associate on *The Right Stuff*, feels that this "team spirit" is what makes B.F.C. different than other companies. "Someone once told me that filmmaking wasn't a democracy," he says. "But at B.F.C. it is more of a democracy. Richard Edlund is the fountainhead, but people relate more directly to him than in other organizations. Normally, in other organizations, you come to the production manager who assumes more of a stronger political position. But it doesn't work that way here. My job function is more to make sure that everybody is talking to everybody, make sure that the shots are getting done correctly, and generally taking a 'Can I help you?' posture."

BRUNO AND THE TERROR DOGS

In addition to the considerable expertise and team-work that Richard Edlund and his crew brought to *Ghostbusters*, there was an added benefit in their participation. Most had worked on *Potter*, giving

them prior experience in handling ghosts. Visual Effects Art Director, John Bruno for example, was Visual Effects Animation Supervisor on the Steven Spielberg/Tobe Hooper film. He had also worked with Ivan Reitman on the *Heavy Metal* movie, as Special Effects Director.

Bruno was in France, working as Production Designer on Chesh and Chang's *Corsican Brothers* movie, when he was contacted to work on *Ghostbusters*. "During that time, I kept getting calls telling me that this project was going, and they needed me to come back and start designing the effects shots. I was really swamped over there, and started on this thing six weeks late. When I came back, a lot of the film had been boarded. The only thing that I originally boarded was all the Terror Dogs scenes, because there wasn't anything done on that earlier. Otherwise, it was all basically redone. I came in with a more direct approach as to how the effects would be done. I would design a shot that I believed could be done. I always approached 'boarding' by trying to see the best way, the most spectacular way in which it can be done, within the context of the story."

Bruno would rough out the 'boards and show them to Reitman for approval. Then, they would be cleaned up and sent for final approval,

where it would sometimes be decided if more or less action was needed, or if any other changes should be made. The final stage was to have a meeting of cameraman Bill Neil, Richard Edlund, Terry Windell and Gerry Waller of the animation department, and Mette Camera Supervisor, Neil Krepela. They would look over the shots and decide what effects elements were necessary to bring the scene to life. Their decisions were then written into the notes on the storyboard.

"We decided early on," adds Bruno, "that what we didn't have on this film, was the total luxury for research and development, although there was some. We don't have a situation where we have three different methods to choose from. If there were six to eight months to finish, we could experiment and see what produced the best results. In this particular case, it has been, 'I feel that this is going to work, I've done it enough before to know it will. Therefore it's better to go this way than trying to develop another method...'"

Bruno sums up his philosophy. "Basically, effects are impression. You're just supposed to show enough so that audiences know what the scene is all about. You don't want to go back and hold on so that you can see the effect. *Star Wars* is a whole series of two-second shots. ►



Above: The Demon Gozer (Sivitz/Jovan). Centre, top to bottom: Ghostbusters Special Effects! The Temple of Gozer, atop Dana's apartment building, is charged with almighty energy. Louis Tully (Rick Moranis) and Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) as Gozer's chosen disciples, absorb the power of Gozer. The Ghostbusters bravely enter the inner chamber of Gozer's Temple. Far right top: A Terror Dog, one of Gozer's emissaries. Bottom right: After the climactic battle with the forces of Darkness, Venkman (Billy Murray) helps Dana away from the temple. Bottom far right: Time enough for Love when New York is safe once more.



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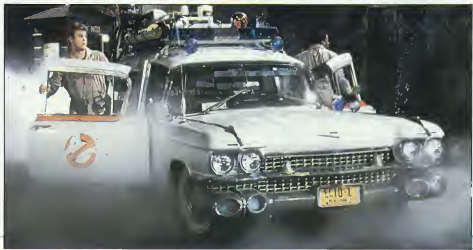
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► Most good effects films are. We have been pushed to another maximum on *Ghostbusters*, in that some of our shots are fairly long. At this point, we're trying to trim them down a little, because there isn't an effects shot in the world that you can get away with for twenty seconds."

SHOOTING IN GOZER'S TEMPLE

Because *Ghostbusters* was shot partly on location in New York, and partly on Stage 16 at the Burbank Studios, where John De Cuir had built his giant Gozer Temple set, a number of mattes were required to enhance the picture. This job fell to Neil Krepela, Matte Camera Supervisor, who came with Edlund from I.L.M., and Matthew Yurich who did the matte paintings for the film. Yurich, one of the most respected matte artists in the industry, has worked on such classics as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) and *Blade Runner* (1982).

"There are about fifty mattes in this picture," says Yurich, "and they're mostly architectural. To match with the temple top created by

John De Cuir, I added about thirty storeys on to the building that we actually used in New York. It's actually an old-fashioned kind of matte work, because you must respect the realism, and yet take license with it. In a way, this is harder because what you're painting is really out there. For instance, there are many buildings two, three or four times taller than this one building. We cut those other buildings down shorter, so that the temple top looks like it's up there alone. We want this to be the building that you see. That in itself is difficult, because the building looks different. Whenever you see the Empire State building in the New York skyline you buy it, because you're familiar with it. This building looks real, but people are going to wonder where it came from.

"The panoramic views of New York posed a problem, because it was like having two paintings on one. On one hand, we're painting a building on top of an existing building, and the two have to fit together. Now, whatever camera trick they use to bring it together, will change my painting of the whole city panorama. So, I have to get the centrepiece tied together well enough that I know how to go on from there.



Opposite top left: Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) as the Gate Keeper is charged with the supernatural power of Gazer. Opposite top right: The Ghostbusters strike an heroic pose after saving New York from a fate worse than oblivion. Opposite below: Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and Winston (Ernie Hudson) pull up outside Ghostbusters HQ. Above: Venkman (Bill Murray) begins to lose patience with Stantz and Spengler (Harold Ramis) during the haunted library scene.

"We also did a lot of what I call 'band-aid shots,'" adds Krepela. "They're not matte paintings in the truest sense, more like fix-its! It might be just taking one building down. Or, if you're going to shoot one little scene, and you want to change one area to make an effect work better, or because somebody forgot something that's going to cause a problem, we can paint it out or put something else in there. For example, in one scene, we painted out some street lights that really cluttered the frame. It's certainly cheaper than going back with the cast and crew and shoot the whole scene all over again."

MATCHING SPFX TO LIVE ACTION

Edlund and his crew took one of their two 65mm cameras down to Stage 16 and on location in New York. "We used the high speed 65mm reflex camera, and a Mitchell camera that was all decked out for location shooting," explains Edlund. "The Mitchell, for example, is perfectly steady and hotrodged for effects work. Our field is so rarified, that almost everything has been hotrodged to some degree."

Neil Krepela worked with Director of Photography Laszlo Kovacs,

A.S.C., to ensure that the 65mm footage would match that of the 35mm live action photography. "We used the 65mm cameras to shoot simultaneously with the 35mm cameras," he explains. "We would pick a different angle, or we would have a different shot than the first unit. We shot a lot of the temple sequence using the 65mm in a wide shot, with a bluescreen behind it, while the 35mm was getting the same actions right next to us on a tight close-up on one of the characters. On many occasions, there were four cameras running, two 65mm and two 35mm. We did that because the director wanted to cover all the angles on scenes that were difficult to re-stage."

"We pretty much told Laszlo our needs for exposing our negative. We overexpose, as compared to what he's doing with his negative. We rate our film a little different, more towards the normal of what Kodak specifies, to get a heavier negative. We find that, as we add effects, the heavier negative dupes better in the optical printer than the thinner negative that you get away with in normal live action production. Laszlo knew that, and he always had enough light for us, and told us what our f/stop setting was. It was always the correct one, and he would stop the 35mm down from that. He's got a great eye

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too. We would have storyboards of our shots. We'd line up and he would check the cameras. If he ever moved the cameras around, it was always for the better. You can't fight that!"

Krepela also precises that a good depth of field is required for matching the live action plates. "For matte painting and effects work in general, if you're going to put something into the scene, such as a monster running towards you, you don't want to have a short depth of field. If you did, it would be mushy back there, and then, when you start shooting your miniature, you've got to match that mush. It just adds a lot of complexity to the thing, and it doesn't always look good, because what you want the public to look at will often be lost."

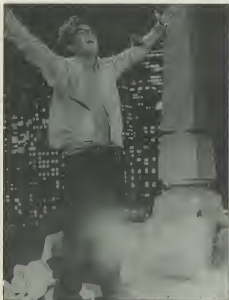
Because the 65mm cameras were always used on set, there is very little chance that any effects would have to be matched to a 35mm live action plate. Says Edlund, "The only time that really happens, is if there are one or two shots that are needed as an afterthought, and which we can do by running the elements in bi-peck in the composite camera. The other reason for that would be if we needed to shoot something at 350 frames per second with a special camera that will go that fast. There's no 65mm camera that can do that. Occasionally we'll shoot an element at 300 frames a second, then take the negative from that, blow it up to a 65mm interpositive, and then it fits back into our process."

THE GHOST MAKERS

While the live action work was being filmed in New York, and later at the Burbank Studios, the special effects team at B.F.C. was busy trying to meet its deadline. Under the direction of Stuart Ziff, a special Ghost Room was put together to handle the final design and construction of the fantasy creatures appearing in the film. These include a ghost dubbed Onion Head, the Terror Dogs, which are dog-shaped demon-agents of Gozer, and finally, the Stay-Puft Man, which is the giant marshmallow creature used by Gozer in the final confrontation with the Ghostbusters.

John Bruno explains how the ghosts were created. "We had a number of concepts of how many types of ghosts there were. I just took the approach that a ghost is anything dead. You could have prehistoric weird things, strange amoebic blobs, animal ghosts, etc. There could be everything as a ghost, and that's what comes back in this film. In the 'ghost geyser' scene, where all of the captured ghosts escape from the Ghostbusters' headquarters, there's just everything that was ever alive, or ever lived for an instant, such as mosquitoes!"

In keeping with the spirit of the film, some of the ghosts were



Top: Comedian Bill Murray looking pretty cool as Ghostbuster Dr Peter Venkman. Above: Louis Tully (Rick Moranis), Dana's nerdy neighbour, is joined by the power of Gozer.

conceived to be scary, and others funny. "the Onion Head, for instance, is a funny ghost," explains Bruno, who traces its evolution to... John Belushi! The Onion Head, conceived by Dan Aykroyd and originally designed by Assistant Producer Michael Gross, was finally sculpted by Steve Johnson, who worked on *Greystoke, An American Werewolf in London* and *The Howling* (1981). "The first thing we heard was that Onion Head was based on John," Bruno comments. "So, we studied *Animal House*. We studied the expressions that John Belushi used in that. But then, it evolved and just acquired its own personality, also because of the actor that's in there. Now, if it doesn't get a laugh in the film, I won't understand! But everything else is played straight. If the film is funny, it's in the way it was written and acted. At no time are the Terror Dogs to be considered not dangerous. What happens in Dana's apartment is a scary thing. The Marshmallow man is not funny. He is ridiculous, but we don't approach him as a joke. You never forget that he is a giant demon, a huge devil god."

To bring these ghosts to life (half-life?), Stuart Ziff hired about 40 artists and technicians. Ziff previously worked on *Star Wars*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Dragonlayer* and *Return of the Jedi*. "I wanted a really dynamic and creative group," he explains. "But, more than that, I didn't want one look. If I were to just hire people for one genre, everything would have looked the same. So, I made a point of bringing in these different groups, which has really meant a lot more turmoil on my part because of the various personalities. Initially, I hoped to have one person per ghost, and have five or six different things to do. But it didn't exactly work out that way. Some guys got more, some were group efforts, some were one man shows. The sculptures take the personality of the person working on them. For example, Uncle Frosos, who is a delightful and bubbly woman, designed the Stay-Puft Man head, and it has her personality in it."

John Berg, who is credited as a Consultant on *Ghostbusters*, agrees with Ziff. "It's always difficult to find people that have that unique gift of being able to synthesise a personality. It's even more difficult on a project like this, because you have several people associated with one creature. So you hope to get a really good group of people able to do that, and that they have enough time and enough good, clear direction to pull it together, so that the entity can start to personify."

ANIMATED MONSTERS

Deciding when to use a full-size costume, or a stop-motion puppet was a constant problem for the production. John Bruno says, "We

constantly needed to figure out if there's something we should do live, to maybe take the weight off the animation department, or stop motion." For the Onion Head, Terry Windell and Garry Waller, the two animation department supervisors and former LLM employees, used a two-inch miniature which they shot on the Oxberry motion control camera. Windell explains, "We're using the miniature, because the actual acrobatics that it does couldn't be done by the large puppet. Annick Terrien and Peggy Regan are two of our technical animators. They are doing a lot of the rotoscoping to meld the characters, such as Onion Head, into the actual live action scene."

In several cases, the original designs had to be modified to fit the animation. Ziff explains, "For example, the Terror Dog design we got looked good, but Randy Cook, who was going to ultimately stop-motion animate it, noticed that, if the mouth closed, the lower teeth were going to puncture through the jaw! The Terror Dogs start off as creatures of stone, and transform. We made this rubber claw that had to break through the plaster. But, it was very delicate, and could not push anything. So, Chuck Gaspar had his guys make little pushrods to break the plaster. We also had Terror Dogs with a person half-way inside, and ten people operating all the mechanisms. Just the logistics of moving all these people around, moving the mechanisms and keeping everything working, was a technical headache, although ultimately it worked out fine. We were saved because it was shot second unit. If we would have had to do the first unit, it would have been a disaster."

"Another thing to touch on is, that while we were building all the creatures, we had to be shooting live action. We had to continue to build them at B.F.C. at the same time as we had to deal with production schedules that were just changing constantly. For example, some days, we'd go to the sound stage and they wouldn't even use us. And these were the same people that I needed back here to build things! We worked continuously, seven days a week to complete the Terror Dogs. We got it done on December 6 and they didn't shoot it until fifteen days later."

Linda Frobos, whose previous jobs include sculpting on *Spacehunter* and *Buckaroo Banzai*, made three Stay-Puft Man heads, one happy, one frowning, and a third one with two major expressions, a grimace and surprise. "They gave us several cartoon drawings of him in different poses and angles. We talked a lot about the feeling that he was supposed to have. What I did," Frobos explains, "was to sculpt a maquette of each expression so that I could look for shapes that could be moved in a certain way, so that they can form either expression. On the face where we need two very different expressions, for instance, I started out with the maquettes and I sculpted a face that is in-between the two expressions required. So the sculpture itself looks very bland. The expressions are achieved with articulations. Because the Stay-Puft Man is very smooth, there's a real difficulty and challenge in trying to articulate its face. Something that is wrinkled, hairy or has very distinguishing lines is very forgiving."

Bill Bryan, who built the Stay-Puft Man costume, and acted the part—except in the stunt scenes portraying the destruction of the Monster by fire—describes it as a combination of a sauna suit and a universal gym! "I was handed the design and was told, 'This is what we got approved and it's probably what we want.' To wear the costume, you have to be able to translate just how fast he could walk. I spent some time just figuring out what the walk was going to be. Would it be a fast man wedding, leg and hand moving at the same time? Or would it be more of a Godzilla swing? We ended up with the swing. Since we're shooting at 72 frames per second, I had to translate it into one third speed movement. The body was made from foam sheet. We built front view suits, backview suits and side view suits. Each shot really had its own problems. There are four burning shots, and each of those required two suits. We also built one suit that had extra long arms to force the perspective, and oversized hands for the same reason."



A BURNING QUESTION

The major problem with the Stay-Puft Man costume was to enable it to burn, and at the same time make it safe for the stuntman that was wearing it. "Originally, I thought that we'd be faking the flame by airbrushing some browning and blackening while on camera," continues Bryan, "and maybe some chemical mixture to get a little bubbling action and some bladders under the surface to get a larger bubbling action, and then animate in the flames, or stick them in optically. But, Richard didn't want that, and the word came down that it did have to be fire, and it did have to look like he'd been doused with gasoline and lit. We were lucky in that the method that we had been using to construct the suit lent itself to including a layer of non-burning foam. And we were also lucky in that the type of foam that looked right also burned right! So, we started with inch-thick foam. Then, we decided that, in order not to get as much pollutants in the air, a half-inch thick would be sufficient. Also, that way, it doesn't eat as close to the stuntman. On the body, there's a half inch of flammable foam, then a half inch of the best non-flammable foam which has 42% fire-retardant additives. We glued it down to a more rigid foam and then smeared another fire retardant into it. Now, it's a leathery texture and has no air bubbles in it, which keeps the other foam from absorbing air."

Supervising the destruction of the Stay-Puft Man was the job of Thaine Morris, Mechanical Effects Supervisor, who is another LLM alumnus. "We used an air mortar to blow its head away, but because it was so heavy, we actually had to jerk it out of frame with a string! As regards the actual burning, we had to come up with a foam that would retard the fire and would not burn through and get to the stuntman. Then, we had to find some kind of flame that would conform to the scale of the Stay-Puft Man, which is one-twelfth scale. We ended up using something called Krackel Kolor to burn the guy up. It's a flammable liquid that burns with just a little bit of sparks, and it seems to keep the flame down. We've taken some liberty with the Stay-Puft





Opposite top: The Ghostbusters see the Stay-Puft Man for the first time
Opposite below left: Our heroes lose the first round to Gozer. Opposite below right: An innocent bystander (Edie Reiss Merin) is startled by a Terror Dog. Above: The Ghostbusters prepare to battle Gozer (Sievitro Jovan, pictured right). Below: Dan Akroyd as Ghostbuster Stentz.



concept, in that we use red sparks instead of blue, when everybody knows that marshmallows burn blue!"

Terry Windell explains how the Marshmallow Man is integrated into the live action footage of New York City, "When the Stay-Puft Man walks down Columbus Circle in New York, he's scaled at 112 1/2 feet tall, and there are literally hundreds of people running from him, cars screeching, etc. . . To incorporate him into live action, you have to literally hand draw each of the characters that pass in front of him. Rather, you create the illusion that they pass in front of him by animating the cars and people to eliminate portions of his feet and put him into the background."

THE BUILDING OF NEW YORK

Mark Stetson, Supervisor of B.F.C.'s Model Shop, was responsible for all the miniature New York buildings in the film. Stetson's previous miniature work includes *Blade Runner*, *The Right Stuff* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. "The biggest thing that we did was Dana's apartment building with the temple on top," explains Stetson.



"The miniature we built for that started at the eighth floor level. From there up it's about a fifteen foot miniature. We stick it up on a five foot platform to indicate the bottom eight floors, and that gives us a twenty foot model to shoot out in the parking lot. There are several shots on it, mostly involving physical gags with contact of some kind. When the building doesn't have something physical happening around it, generally it's a matte painting. When the Stay-Puft Man is on it, generally it's the miniature, although there are shots of the existing building, with plates of the Marshmallow Man composited to it."

"The Gozer temple is blasted apart at the end of the film, and that was all done as a pyrotechnical gag on the model," continues Stetson. "Thaine Morris has had five shots at blowing the top off. We quickly rebuild it each time he does it." Morris explains, "The miniature explosion thing has sort of fallen into a situation where there's two or three of us in the industry that seem to be able to get away with it, and make it look reasonably well designed. . . What you have to do is blow it up slow. That sounds like a contradiction in terms, but what it means is that you have to use a bunch of smaller explosives and actually push whatever it is apart. You time it so it's stretched out, so you get what ▶

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► looks like a very large explosion that's actually a whole bunch of little ones. I have a timer so that I can control them to .001 seconds."

The model was built with strong construction plywood and meticulously put together. "There's no stage we have here that's tall enough to accommodate the whole building," comments Stetson, "so we had to build it in such a way that it was open enough inside to be able to light up rooms as required, and strong enough to be able to withstand people climbing on it. It had to be able to come apart in three sections, and finally to withstand the pyrotechnic blasts. Most of it was a matter of careful construction to begin with. In the pyrotechnic area, we had prepared a bomb chamber. The temple floor is quarter-inch steel, and has big, square, tubular steel upright columns welded on to both the bottom and top cover plates, so that the entire blast is actually contained in welded steel. To the upright columns we added aluminium fixtures and cast urethane panelling. In the first test, the aluminium braces were actually riveted to the steel, and the rivets were blown out."

"The facade is all in either vacuum form, brick panelling or ornamental cast urethane to simulate ornamental plaster. Some areas on it are break away and are cast in lighter urethane or plaster. The top fountain-like ornament is in fibreglass. The scale of the building was determined based on the size of the Stay-Puft Men. Since it was decided that that would be a man in a suit, and since we knew that he was supposed to be 112 1/2 feet, we scaled the building to that. It came out to be a 1/18th scale building. Which is an awkward scale to build in, because there's nothing available in that scale that you can buy stock components of. It was about a ten week job and we've been maintaining and modifying it for the last two or three weeks."

THE PHANTOM GUN SLINGERS

Another weird concept that was created in the film was the weapon used by the Ghostbusters to deal with the various creatures they encounter. These Neutrons Wands are actually used by the Ghostbusters to entrap their phantom victims. "We wanted something different," explains Bruno. "We didn't want lasers. We didn't want lightning bolts at the ends. What the guns are doing is pulling atoms out of the wall. When you move it, it moves like a hose of water and is stuck to a point and dragging all the time." The Neutron Wands were animated by Gary Waller and Terry Windell's department. "At first we designed them to be a straight, black and white high-contrast element," Terry Waller explains. "In other words, we produce black and white artwork, shoot a negative which then becomes the optical printing element, which they print in colour. It's designed in such a way that there are actually three separate pieces of artwork per frame



on black and white. The wand is thus animated, inked, and separated into three levels, shot and sent to opticals.

"Since then, it's now multiplied up to five elements. Several new colour elements are compounded with multiple moves, such as the guntips now flare as if they have a muzzle flash. There's a spectral light, like two lines of a starburst. It's a magenta flare bisected by blue, horizontal light. The centre is like a laser, only rubberised. It's as if the gun is shooting out energy and sucking in molecules at the same time. It's very hard to do convincing animation, because they have to be more than a slick laser. The first time they come on, they get a laugh just because of the Ghostbusters' reactions. But, at the same time you have to give them enough polish so that it merits the laugh."



Top: A detail from the full-size mock-up of Dana Barrett's apartment building. You can just make out the rafters of the studio in the top corners of the picture. Above: Van Helsing (Bill Murray) and Dana (Sigourney Weaver) emerge triumphant from the apartment building at the end of the movie.

SOMETHING WEIRD IN THE FRIDGE

Waller and Windell also developed a tunnel effect to portray the door into Gozer's Dimension that is located in Dana's refrigerator. "It's basically a Hitchcock effect," says Waller. "Something's coming at you, but you zoom away from it." "What that is, at this point of the film, is a glimpse into the future," explains Bruno. "We want everybody to see it, and not know what they saw. Technically, we're taking a plate that we already shot of the pyramid and the stairway. We did a painting earlier, that's basically a typical hell setting of flames and orange colours and a lot of heat. In there are the clouds that you will see at the end of the film, but everything will be orange. There will be flames, and as we move into the refrigerator, there will be Terror Dog images. You'll be able to see it if you know what it is, but at that point you probably won't know. In the long shot we don't want to be quite able to see it. The close up will have a dog rise right up into the frame, and there will be a flare coming out of its mouth that will obscure anything that you think you saw, and which will scare Dana enough to close the door. We need dry ice smoke at floor level for the effect. But, the problem is that you can't have flames come up through it, because it puts out the smoke. So, Thaine Morris has come up with some other solution for that problem - yellow smoke, a light lemon colour with flames coming out of that, and the dog rises up and jumps out."



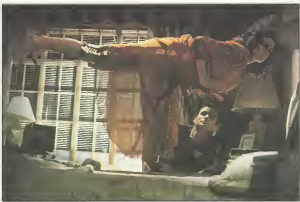
► For this sequence, Gary Platek designed and executed various laser-generated effects. Platek worked previously on *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Poltergeist*, *The Right Stuff* and *Gremlins*. He explains, "The laser system is a 5 watt argon laser. Which gives me about nine different shades of greens and blues and ultraviolet light. Then, I also have a dial laser which gives me continuous shading control over yellow, orange and red. Anything in between, I can turn a little dial and it changes those colours. The outputs of those are aimed at an X-Y galvanometer, which are little electromagnets with mirrors on top. They're like small electric motors. One moves vertically and one moves horizontally. Combine those two and you can draw a circle. Combine them even faster, you can write a name or draw a picture. The galvanometers are hooked up to an Apple computer. That computer has a Gibson light-pen and a program that was written by a man named Gary Leo. We started this little system on *Poltergeist*. Basically we built it up in a week, and over the next year refined it. With the light-pen, I can draw on the computer screen whatever shape I want the laser to draw. I can draw up to sixteen shapes, and then I can pick what order I want those shapes to appear in, in what size and on

what path. I can make a whole little animation. It has the capability to draw a little man that runs around and changes size and shape. I don't do that, but I could. What I usually do is draw in something abstract, maybe ten abstract shapes that are related, then I animate those to get an effect.

"For example, in the end sequence, in the temple, at the top of the pyramid, there will be a golden, yellow light coming out of it. That's a laser effect. What I did, was to draw a pyramid shape, with no bottom and I aimed that at a piece of mylar, then I aimed that right at the camera, right around the lens. So, you have a pyramid shaped piece of light coming at you, but you can't see it. So I have to introduce something into the air that will let you see it. For that, I have a fifty gallon drum of water that I heat, then put dry ice in there and blow the dry ice towards the camera for about three feet. That way, we get this sort of light fingers effect. Another place where I use the laser is with *Union Head*. He's going to go crashing into a wall in one scene. They wanted an "ectosplat" effect. All I did that time was draw a straight line with the laser in a parallel to a table, with the camera above it looking down to match the angle of the camera looking at the wall in



Above: A special effects technician adds some finishing touches to one of the full size Terror Dog models with a fine paint brush. Right: "She sleeps above the covers... four feet above the covers!" Possessed by the demon Gazer, Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) levitates before the curious eyes of Venkman (Bill Murray). Below: Bewitched, bothered and bewildered, that's the Ghostbusters. In this picture they look about them as the power of Gazer rocks New York to its collective foundations.



the scene. Then, I took a beaker of hot water with dry ice in it, and then just let a little wad of smoke go down to hit the table, and all you see when it hits the laser light is that shock wave."

THE WHOLE SHOOTING MATCH

Bill Neil, the cameraman, was in charge of photographing the special effects plates and the miniature photography. "My contribution hopefully doesn't stand out. I hope that it all blends in and becomes a part of the story. Part of what I do is to try to understand what the Director of Photography is doing and why he's doing it. What he does is a guide to what we do here, in terms of lighting and the feel of it. Even in terms of composition. We often have to have much more light on the set because we have much less depth of field. So, where the first unit 35mm can shoot at a 3.5 exposure, we have to use 4 or 4.5. We have to be at least a stop and sometimes two stops hotter than they are to hold the field. It varies. We also expose for a denser negative, so that we can manipulate the film. First unit film is not going through the generations that we're going through. We can't work on the edge, we

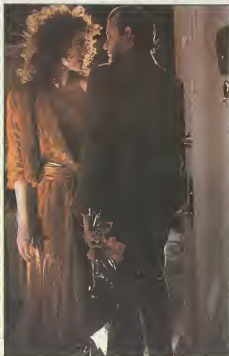
have to have a very well exposed negative.

"We don't have scaled down lights. I was able to do that on one picture, and it worked out pretty well. With this one, we're working pretty much with stage lights, the same kind of lights we use in the studio. We just have to cut them and play with them to fake the scale. We're often running not at 24 frames, but some elevated or lowered frame rate, and that changes the way the light appears too. I may be using a 10k to light a very small building, and it's a huge light source, so I have to squeeze it down in some way to get the levels I need, as well as to have the apparent source match what Laszlo used in 35mm. Wherever there's reference material from the first unit, I try to use that as a guide to try to get this material blend in and disappear, and not look like it was done at another time and another place and scale."

The Stay-Puft Man, because it was made of foam, and had a white, reflective surface, posed its own set of problems. "When you have a miniature building that is in darker earthtones, and you have this pristine, white Stay-Puft Man that's supposed to be dimly lit," Neil explains, "then we have a problem. The building takes much more light than the Stay-Puft, so you play around and keep the light off the



Top left and left: The Ghostbusters crash into evilness with their most potent weapons, the Neutone Wends, which are used to immobilised "spiritual entities" while a ghost trap is placed in position below them. Bottom left: "Are you the Key Master?" puns the possessed Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver). Above: The real Key Master, Louis Tully (Rick Moranis) revels in the power of Gazer. Below: One of the stone creatures at the Temple of Gazer which will later come to life to be a Terror Dog



Stay-Puft Man. When you have Stay-Puft right against the building, it becomes a real problem to light the building at one level and Stay-Puft at another, while trying to keep it all looking like it's coming from the same sources. You just have to deal with it shot by shot. It's part of the challenge of the whole thing, to do that in such a way that it's not obvious. Fortunately, in this end of things, we often have the luxury of doing some bracketing ahead of time. We can test out how the Stay-Puft Man behaves in different lighting situations. For example, we found that the Stay-Puft suit changed its reflectivity with time. If the suit was made a week ago, it would photograph differently than if it were made yesterday. The foam yellows in a mysterious sort of way. It's not that it changes colour, it changes in apparent brightness. So, you have to keep track of it. I've worked with a lot of creatures, and I've never had them change from day to day!"

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The task of putting all these special effects together went to Conrad Riff, Visual Effects Editor, whose credits include *E.T.*, *Pallergest* and



Right: Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) as the Gate Keeper and Louis Tully (Rick Moranis) as the Key Master. Below left: The main and the central Ghost. Dana is dead to the Tropics! Given on the roof of her apartment building. Below right: The Ghostbusters battle shoulder-to-shoulder before a serious tropical onslaught



The Empire Strikes Back. "My responsibilities are to take all the elements that are shot and try and compose them and synchronise them in such a way that they play well in the scene, based on what the live action editor has done. In the case of *Ghostbusters* there are a lot of live action things which we are adding to. I have to edit out the pieces that I think will work best physically with the scene. The only problems are in terms of pacing and timing elements, trying to give them life and make them physically look like they belong in the scene, that the characters are reacting and the ghost is reacting. All of that takes a lot of designing on my part, along with the cameraman and the art director initially. So, I had a lot of input up front, as opposed to having things delivered to me and trying to make them work."

Mark Vargo supervised all the optical composites, which is the culmination of combining all the elements: mattes, animation, models, plates and blue screen. "Even though everyone's efforts contribute equally to the final outcome," he says, "it really is an optical printer movie, because of the illusion of reality that has to work, otherwise it looks phony."

In spite of the large number of effects present in *Ghostbusters*,



director Ivan Reitman relies essentially on the comedic elements to carry the film. "I screened *Ghostbusters* to small audiences in its rough state, without any effects at all, except the mechanical ones that we did on and I figured that was going to have to work and it will only get better, but it better work right now. Fortunately it did. I found I'm no longer relying on the inclusion of everything to save me. My approach now was, that it's got to work as a movie in its roughest form, without anything, without special effects, audio effects, proper colour balancing or music."

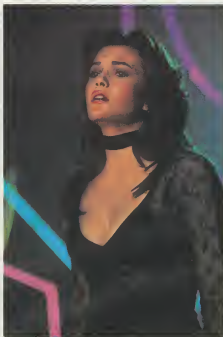
As it's turned out, Ivan Reitman needn't have worried. *Ghostbusters* worked just fine for American audiences. Released in the United States on 8th June this year, *Ghostbusters* proved a big hit with the paying customers, hitting the number one spot in the film charts and within 66 days has taken a staggering \$163 million at cinema box-offices on that side of the Atlantic. Which makes it, in financial terms, the film of 1984.

Ghostbusters opens in Britain on 7th December to take advantage of the Christmas holiday season, and very likely will do equally good business here. See it. You won't be sorry!

STARBURST FILM REVIEWS



Above: Ellen Aam (Diane Lane) with the Attackers and the Sorels in concert. Below: The meanest man in town, leader of the motorcycle gang that captures Ellen, Raven (Willem Dafoe). Right: Diane Lane as Ellen Aam.



STREETS OF FIRE

"The most innovative
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A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

How ironic that it took a feature film director to make the best rock video-inspired movie. Anyone who has followed the career of Walter Hill will need no urging to see *Streets of Fire*. On the surface it would seem to be another typical Hill excursion into stylised gang violence set against a rain washed, neon-lit landscape. It isn't just that at all. *Streets of Fire* is the most innovative, ground-breaking film to be seen this year outside of the Coppola stable. Its daring, audacious assault on both

the visual and the aural senses means another step into the future for cinema as a whole.

Streets of Fire is an urbanised Western drenched in classic pop culture. Set in "Another Time, Another Place", the era it successfully evokes is the 1960s – the 1950s as seen through the star-gazing eyes of someone living in the 1930s, that is. With its exaggerated realism, it conjures up a milieu that is both futuristic and strange as it tells the tale of superstar Ellen Aam who is kidnapped by one of her psychotic fans, Raven. Her manager, Billy Fish, as a result is coerced into hiring her ex-boyfriend to execute her escape from Raven's downtown nightclub hideaway. Hill sums it up perfectly himself when he describes his movie as "The Queen of the Hop captured by the Leader of the Pack and rescued by a Soldier Boy".

Streets of Fire is one long intentional cliché from beginning to end. All the dialogue comes straight out of

B-western lore, underlined by the obvious cyphers portrayed by the actors – none more so than Michael Paré's Tom Cody overdoing the Gary Cooper impersonation to perfection. Don't ever forget that this film is "A Rock and Roll Fable". That means a false statement – a myth – a legend. To take its parodies seriously would undermine everything that Walter Hill is trying to achieve – and sudden death to enjoying its full potential.

These comic strip aspirations are highlighted by a radical editing style a lot of the time in perfect synch with the thunderous music score, the opening and closing numbers penned and produced by Jim Steinman being the best examples. There's nothing new in this technique of course, but the twist here is that Hill deliberately cuts on the main points of action and the result is the perfect recreation of comic book expression. When Ellen Aam escapes bondage in a sleazy leather bar, the mind reels from the economy of Hill's unique

purely cinematic approach. It is doubtful whether music and images have ever been put to better use.

Streets of Fire is the first film to feature stereo frame wipes as well. The effect of this is galvanising and yet another upturning of convention that has been a trait in all of Walter Hill's work. This genius reaches complete fruition in *Streets of Fire*. For that, and a myriad of other reasons, I nominate it my film of the year. See it at least twice!

Starring: Michael Paré (as Tom Cody), Diane Lane (Ellen Aam), Rick Moranis (Billy Fish), Amy Madigan (McCoy), Willem Dafoe (Raven), Deborah Van Valkenburgh (Irene), Richard Lawson (Ed Price), Rick Rosenthal (Officer Cooley), Bill Paxton (Kinky), Lee Ving (Gwen)

Directed by Walter Hill. Screenplay by Walter Hill and Larry Gross. Photographed by Andrew Ludo. Edited by Freeman Davies and Michael Riggs. Produced by Lawrence Gordon and Joel Silver.

Time: 94 mins

Cert: 15

GHOSTBUSTERS

"A resounding popular hit."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Being thrilled, amused and scared in equal proportions is big at the box-office at the moment. Now, hot on the heels of *Gremlins*, comes another expertly crafted roller-coaster ride through the more insane horror-comic elements of recent times. *Ghostbusters* is nothing more than a *Saturday Night Live* sketch done on a 30 million dollar budget, but apart from a lapse in pacing during its central section, it can't be faulted. It aims to please and makes certain we are all having a good time.

Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis are booted out of their cushy college-funded parapsychology programme and decide to set themselves up in business as spook exterminators for hire. After dispatching a particularly greedy ghoulish green blob from a hotel ballroom, they find themselves the darlings of the media and are quick to capitalise on this by endorsing sundry items like diet/exercise courses. Enter Sigourney Weaver, in a role that will win her even more attention from her existing legion of fantasy fans, as a musician with a demon living in her refrigerator. The stage is thus set for the biblical prophecy of Judgement Day to become a reality especially



Above: High above the streets of Manhattan the Great Gozer (Starlitz Jovan) displays her power. Below: The Ghostbusters (Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray and Harold Ramis) in a haunted hotel.

when the Ghostbusters' HQ is forced by the Department of the Environment to shut down its netherworld spirit safe and the Ghostbusters find themselves battling it out with the greatest nemesis the world has ever seen - a giant marshmallow man!

Everything in *Ghostbusters* is larger than life and outlandish. Mainly it is the perfect showcase for Richard Edlund's *Pottergeist*-inspired special effects and the deadpan humour of actor Bill Murray. Edlund really does pull off some spectacular stunts marked by flourishes of originality. The benign library spectre that suddenly frightens the life out of you is just one example. Another is the wonderful panoramic

shot of Manhattan with various ghosts dispersing all around the city from the roof of the Ghostbusters establishment. My real favourites though are the power guns, used by our intrepid team to force the apparitions into steel traps, which resemble *Star Wars* laser guns gone berserk.

It must also be noted that the scope of *Ghostbusters* is pretty impressive for an Earthbound fantasy and the fact that director Ivan Reitman has pulled it off in a remarkably short production schedule with such fine results nearly makes me regret all I've said about his *Meatballs* and *Stripes*.

But it's the meshing of broad-based comedy with the paranormal that hits

home the hardest, especially in the battle with ancient gods atop a Central Park West penthouse. Here the witty repartee - as Weaver turns into a stop-motion hound from hell, Murray deprecatingly apologises for his girlfriend being "A dog" - takes the edge off the H.P. Lovecraftian horrors.

This horror/comedy formula is nothing new of course. Bob Hope did it years ago with *Ghostbreakers* - a scene out from the film actually had Aykroyd listing all the films that were inspirations - but only today's technology could make this melding such a resounding popular hit.

Note: See page 10 this issue for full cast and credits listing.



VIDEO FILE

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

I wonder if any of my fellow video viewers out there are starting to suffer from a curious condition I've noticed in myself – the obscure feeling that a film doesn't really "exist" till you can hold the cassette box in your hand. I'm fighting this disease, as I know that the cinema remains the place to see a film. Still, while watching the greatly enjoyable *Conan The Destroyer* and later, *Supergirl* (which, for all the faults Alan Jones so correctly detailed, still gave me several moments of pleasure!) I still found myself thinking "I wonder how these two will come across on video?" Anyway, down to business.

VIDEOZONE

Thorn EMI have issued David Cronenberg's film of *The Dead Zone*, another in the now lengthy line of Stephen King adaptations (what will filmmakers do when they run out of King titles – as *Cutty Broccoli* is about to do with Ian Fleming?)

The film is something of a departure for Cronenberg – after the surrealistic delirium of *Videodrome* with its customary graphic effects, *The Dead Zone* is a low-key drama of the supernatural, with a beautifully delineated winter setting (the very landscape becomes a sort of "Dead Zone", like the limbo from which the central character, played by Christopher Walken, returns after an automobile accident.) Walken's accident liberates in him the ability to foretell disastrous futures in store for certain individuals he comes into contact with. His "gift" or "curse" culminates in his having to reluctantly undertake a political assassination, which Cronenberg directs with all the tension John Frankenheimer employed in a similar scene for his stunning *Manchurian Candidate*.

There are flaws in the presentation of the various situations Walken encounters (which, unlike the better integrated book, come dangerously near to seeming like a sort of "Adventures of a pre-cognitive medium" series). And I found it difficult to identify with the agony of the hero – Walken's playing is superb but we remain uninvolved in his predicament. Still, the film is further proof of Cronenberg's wayward brilliance, and a safe video rental bet, if you're searching for something more troubling than less serious video fantasy.

WISE CHOICE

Robert Wise's *The Andromeda Strain* (NIC) is a reminder of how successful this veteran director's genre efforts



The brooding features of Christopher Walken, as Johnny Seward the psychic, in David Cronenberg's film of Stephen King's book, *The Dead Zone* (Thorn EMI)

TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT



starburst's at-a-glance guide to the tops and flops currently lurking on the shelves of your local video shop.

HITS

1. *War Games* (Warner)
2. *Day The Earth Caught Fire* (Intervision)
3. *Flend Without a Face* (Kingston)
4. *Endangered Species* (MGM)
5. *The Fly* (CBS/FOX)

PITS

1. *Shank* (Ver)
2. *Echoes* (Astra)
3. *Beyond and Back* (HVM)
4. *Curse of Death* (VTL)
5. *Haunted* (Video Unlimited)

have always been (*Day the Earth Stood Still*, *The Haunting* etc). Here, a deadly space-spawned virus is the source of much skillfully manipulated tension.

HAMMERING THE POINT

Hammer Lives! Despite the fact that the company which quite rightly won the Queen's Award for Industry no longer produces full-length feature films (and we've good cause to miss some small miracles in atmosphere and imagination on painfully strained budgets), Hammer has produced another tv series under the title of *The Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense*.

Brent Walker video have issued the first two episodes on tape, both directed by Hammer alumnus John Hough, and as the new title suggests, the emphasis is less on horror than the first series. Of the two episodes, the second, *A Distant Scream*, is by far the best – an imaginative and well-acted ghost story which skillfully avoids cliché. Performances by David Caradine (each episode has a statutory imported American star – shades of Hammer's first feature films!) and Stephanie Beacham are very well judged, and it's a shame that his wasn't chosen as the premiere episode. *Black Carrion*, which was, begins promisingly enough with an attempt to track down two Everly Brothers-like pop stars of the Sixties who have mysteriously vanished, but quickly founders on a preposterous resolution (the preposterous can be made viable when presented with conviction, but the villagers' actions here – about which I can't be specific – simply have insufficient motivation). Still, one looks forward to the next video issue, *Paint Me A Murder* directed by Alan Cooke, and starring Michelle Phillips, and *The Late Nancy Irving* directed by Peter Sasdy (who made one of the most thematically interesting of the Chris Lee Draculas, *Taste the Blood of Dracula*).

VINTAGE DANTE

Warner home video have a knack of including one lesser known movie along with the "big guns" in their video packages – recently, they premiered the excellent *Angel of Vengeance* along with *Never Say Never Again* and other mammoths. Now, along with *War Games* (which I'll cover next month) and James Toback's stylish *Exposed*, they've issued Joe Dante's premiere effort *Hollywood Boulevard* (co-directed with Allan Arkush.)

Many of the jokes in Dante's clever spoof of an exploitation film studio

(Miracle Films) will be appreciated only by readers of this magazine (particularly a lovely gag about the creation of the alien in *Robot Monster*), but the film's appeal could be wider if the average video rental customer realises that Warners' packaging suggests a sex movie rather than a witty genre parody (not that Dante doesn't include enough pulchritude to keep his boss and mentor, Roger Corman, more than happy). **Starburst** readers will relish, among other things, a Mario Beve-style masked-killer-and-victim scene (all dry ice and arc lamps) and the most extended appearance of Corman's greatest bit player, Dick Miller (who now appears as a sort of mascot in every Dante Movie).

HORROR PROGRAMMERS

Deadline is a new title from Atlantis; *Selma* was a Canadian video, as is this thin re-make of it under another title. A Stephen King-like writer finds his literary horrors invading his life. Atlantis Video have a knack of picking winners like *Next of Kin* – they've lucked out this time. Director is Mario Azopardo.

Some intelligence is displayed in Mike Gray's *Wavelength* (Medusa) in its treatment of alien visitors kept in secrecy (and suspended animation) by the U.S. military, and there are some genuinely witty lines in the screenplay. It's a shame we're allowed to see so much of the aliens, however – they soon lose their "otherness" and become just kids in body make-up.

FULCI FANS ONLY

You might expect that Lucio Fulci's entry in the burgeoning Sword and Sorcery stakes might be different from the usual crop of Spaghetti Conans, and *Conquest* (VCI) certainly strikes some new notes. For openers, while most Conan clones are brightly lit (revealing all the paucity of budget limitations), Fulci shoots his strange images (such as a naked villainess with a metal mask) through a haze of mist, with endless chiaroscuro effects blurring all edges. Unfortunately this proves disastrous in the video print, with poor tape quality making everything even more irritatingly grainy. Still, despite a clod-hoppingly inappropriate synthesiser score by ex-Goblin Simonetti, there are moments to please the Fulci follower—he even manages to pit a few of his beloved zombies against his hero!

AVERAGE AMITYVILLE

Richard Fleischer has always been a director with a keen visual sense in action-orientated or fantasy movies (*The Vikings*, *Fantastic Voyage*, *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, etc.), and the fact that he's at the helm of *Conan The*



"It's astounding... time is fleeing... madness takes its toll..." *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is finally available on CBS/Fox video.

Destroyer has resulted in very lively further exploits of that muscular Cimmerian – don't miss it! But with *Amityville 3* (Thorn EM) – as *Amityville 3D* has become in its flat video form – he needs every iota of his skills to inject some vitality into a plot that is becoming a little on the threadbare side. And it's much to Fleischer's credit that he does make this third venture into demonic real estate very watchable – even the now pointless 3-D gimmicks (torches and other objects waved at the viewer, and so on) become part of a well-judged essay in keeping us apprehensive for the characters, however thin. If you liked parts I and II, you'll lap up part three – particularly a well-realised demon (courtesy John Capalone) that drags a character down to the nether regions at the end.

One has to feel sorry for Fleischer, having been saddled with a script that is clearly in frantic need of ideas. Having plundered the earlier movies in the series, the writers are now obliged to borrow from other horror movies (the distorted photographs that foretell the death of a character, à la *The Omen*; the drowned child who may or may not have re-appeared, à la *Don't Look Now*, etc.). Still, if you can live with this, you'll be pleasantly diverted. It's a shame, however, that all Capalone's make-up effects are not on view in this print.

CULT CLASSIC

There'll be much rejoicing over the release on video of Richard O'Brien's cult favourite *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (CBS/Fox) – now those cultists who attend midnight showings of Jim Sharman's movie and chant the lines along with the actors can do so in the privacy of their own home – although I suspect that the audience feedback that is so much a part of the film's continued appeal may be sorely missed with the video – unless cultists can arrange RHPS parties at each other's houses? For those of us not addicted, it's still a lively, witty horror/SF spoof, with some cleverly judged performances (particularly Tim Curry's outrageous Dr Frank N. Furter). The sons are uniformly undistinguished, but that won't worry the enthusiasts!

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

From Thorn EM, Nic Roog's hypnotic *Don't Look Now*, *Fire And Ice* and *Warlords of Atlantis*. Videospace has Juliet Mills' *Exorcist* – clone, *The Devil Within Her*. From Alpha video, supernatural terror in *Naras*, and VTC has *White Fire*. Videosform is issuing *Lucifer Complex*, and EIV the spoof *Spacemup*.

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer Barry Forshaw.

Britain's current wave of censorship hysteria has even struck the tv *Star Trek* – in a particularly nervous move the BBC has banned several episodes in the current showing of the series as being "considered unsuitable". But CIC Video has come to the rescue by issuing two of the forbidden episodes, *The Empath* (director John Erman) and *Miri* (director Vincent McEveety). Ironically both episodes do have minor details that might upset the hyper-sensitive (which these days seems to be everyone but devotees of *Starburst*) – nevertheless, they're both intelligent, above-average episodes that deserve a showing – either on late-night tv (or better yet, video!).



There are several things that sink Kenny Everett's horror parody, *Blood Bath At The House of Death* (Thorn EM) – leaden script, slack direction (Ray Cameron) and the shameful waste of talented performers like Pamela Stephenson and Vincent Price. But Everett himself is the final nail in the coffin – like so many tv comics before him, his personality does not survive the transition to big screen.

Rank's video issue of *Vampire Circus* will allow you to see all the things that L.T.V. deemed unacceptable in their last showing of the film – complete, this is one of the livelier Hammer vampire films that effectively covers the absence of the indispensable Cushing and Lee.

With *Cross Country* (Thorn EM) Paul Lynch has made a quantum leap in directorial technique from the likes of *Prom Night*; this is a taut, intelligent and erotic thriller in the "road movie" idiom with powerful characterisations and top-notch acting (Richard Beymer, providing there's life after *West Side Story*, and the excellent Michael Ironside, menacing villain of *Scanners* and many other movies). One can even forgive the usual dull synthesised score, if not the appalling "theme" song in the last reel.

• IT'S ONLY A MOVIE •

A Column by John Brosnan

"We're taking him to the Federation Funny Farm," said a security guard in *Star Trek 3: The Search for Spock*, referring to 'Bones' McCoy who had been dropping his marbles all over the solar system. "About time too!" I yelled at the screen. "Send the lot of them to the Federation Funny Farm!"

But it was not a wise move. The cinema was full of Trekkies. Big, beefy Trekkies with thighs like beer barrels and thick, hairy arms. And the men were even bigger. I watched the rest of the film stuffed down the back of my seat listening to my bones knit. I decided I would save the rest of my critical comments until I reached the safety of this column...

Star Trek 3 is an appalling movie. It's not quite as appalling as *Star Trek 2*, mainly because I detected the odd flash of subversive humour in the script, put there presumably by writer/producer Harve Bennett who perhaps doesn't take the whole *Star Trek* mythos as seriously as he appears to. But apart from these few jokes the general tone of the film was more portentous and self-regarding than even the previous two movies.

The TV series featured a bunch of fairly pleasant cardboard characters; the *Star Trek* movies have turned these same characters into cardboard icons. The air of religiosity that pervades *Star Trek 3* is quite embarrassing, especially in the treatment of Spock where there seems to be a deliberate attempt to create parallels between him and Jesus Christ: Spock has 'died' in order to save the rest of the crew; the seal on his cabin is mysteriously broken (ie, the boulder is mysteriously rolled away from the mouth of his tomb); his body disappears from his coffin, leaving only his burial shroud behind; he is eventually resurrected and passes

among his friends once again, and so on. Even the advertising campaign exploits the Christ-like parallels with that odd, silhouette-in-negative of Spock's face which suggests the image of Christ's face on the Turin Shroud.

At the end of the movie, when the lights came on, I expected to see all the Trekkies on their hands and knees, heads bowed, and chanting, "Praise be to Spock..." Perhaps they save that sort of thing for the privacy of their homes and convention hotels.

Seriously though, I think there's something wrong when the makers of what is basically a piece of inflated hack work have to exploit religion in order to give their movie an element of spurious 'significance'.

OBITUARIES

It seems 1984 is taking its toll among film stars and writers. I was particularly saddened by the death of James Mason. My favourite role of his was, of course, as Captain Nemo in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* but he gave marvellous performances in so many other movies as well, such as *North by Northwest* where he played one of Hitchcock's most memorable villains, the smooth and sinister Van Dam.

The ranks of science fiction writers have been thinned this year as well; by the death of A. Bertram Chandler in Australia and by the death of the American writer Walter Tevis. The latter I would rank as one of the top sf writers of all even though the body of his sf work was relatively small. His most famous sf novel is *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, which is far superior to the movie, but he's probably best known as the author of *The Hustler*. I can heartily recommend all his books, not that there are very many, both sf and non-sf. As a writer he was something special...



Above: One of the few attractions of *Star Trek 3: The Search for Spock*. Robin Curtis as Lt. Sarek. Below left: "Wake up, Bones! We're due on set in five minutes." You can't mean it, Jim!

NEW BOND

A Brosnan as James Bond? Yes, that was the exciting news in a recent edition of *The Mail on Sunday*: "Sultry actress Cassandra Harris and her 'Remington Steele' star husband Pierce Brosnan - optimistically claimed by some to be the next James Bond - have enjoyed a lengthy stay in Dublin while Pierce has been filming. Dublin wags are already calling Brosnan 0007, but there has been a serious side to his and Cassandra's stay. They were reunited in the privacy of their hotel suite with the father Pierce never knew, retired wood machinist Tom Brosnan. The meeting, their first in 30 years, lasted two hours and ended in emotional tears. Touchingly, bike-riding Tom, up for the day from Tralee, invested in a new suit for the occasion."

Well, after reading that I brushed away a tear or two and wondered if good old Pierce, or 0007 as I would call him from now on, had much difficulty in convincing Broccoli he wasn't related to the author of *James Bond in the Cinema*, Broccoli's least favourite volume. Then I began to muse about the possible beneficial effects of having the Brosnan surname become famous. Would it help the sales of my books, perhaps? Would people at last understand the name over the tele-

phone and stop referring to me as 'Mr Rosalind'?

But also these dreams soon crumbled, for in the following week's *Mail on Sunday* there was this small, depressing item: "It was reported in last Sunday's *Mail on Sunday* that film producer Albert R. (Cubby) Broccoli had signed actor Pierce Brosnan in a secret deal to be the new James Bond now that Roger Moore has decided to play the character no longer. It has been brought to our attention that neither of these statements is true, and we are glad to put the record straight."

So no 0007 after all. But does that mean poor old cycling Tom Brosnan had to give back the new suit? Ah, it's tough being a Rosalind...

MORE BOND

A final Bond-related story cribbed from another Sunday paper, the *Observer*. It seems that James Baldwin, America's most prestigious black author, was in a restaurant in the south of France recently and noticed an Italian woman staring very hard at him. A waiter then approached him with a message from her: "Mrs Roger Moore would like to know if you are the actor who played the piano player in the film *Casablanca*..."

It must run in the family. But enough of all this - Beam me up, Scotty. I'm ready for the Federation Funny Farm.

In order to complete the information given last month on *Thunderbirds 2086* here is an episode guide in anticipation of the series making it to British TV screens.

1. **Fireball.** When an asteroid on collision course with the Earth is destroyed, the resulting debris disables a space colony. The Thunderbirds must rescue its commander, who is trying to pilot the colony out into space before its propulsion module explodes and destroys four other nearby colonies.

2. **Computer Madness.** A master computer takes over a lunar research centre and threatens the colonists. The Thunderbirds attempt a rescue, but are first engaged in battle with the computer's robot spacecraft and tanks.

3. **The Return.** When a research spaceship suddenly reappears after a seventy-year absence, the Thunderbirds are sent to investigate. They soon learn that a robot guardian has been sent to protect the craft's unconscious pilot and the only man who can control it is too sick to help.

4. **Motor-Head.** The Thunderbirds discover a monstrous machine sinking ships in the Antarctic. They are soon on the trail of an ingenious enemy of the World Federation that is trying to take control of the oceans.

5. **Devil's Moon.** A cosmic cloud transforms a lunar astronaut into a power hungry creature with amazingly strange super powers. The Thunderbirds move into action and discover the power source deep within the mysterious cloud.

6. **Journey Beyond Jupiter.** A massive space colony doing research on Jupiter's moon is drawn into what appears to be a black hole. The Thunderbirds must rescue the station and avoid the perilous phenomenon.

7. **First Contact.** Astronauts discover an unusual stone on a distant moon of Neptune. It turns out to be an alien weapon that sends a signal for an invasion fleet. It is up to the Thunderbirds team to rescue the astronauts and show the aliens that the Earth is truly a peaceful planet.

8. **Test Flight.** Thunderbird pilot Dylan Beyda volunteers to test fly a highly advanced spacecraft. The ship, however, goes out of control and crash lands on a barren asteroid on the other side of the Universe. The Thunderbirds must find a way to rescue him.

9. **Droid.** A computer malfunction creates havoc with robots designed for factory work. The robots go on a march against the humans and the Thunderbirds are called in to stop the robot rebellion.

10. **Typhoon.** When a weather-control satellite is accidentally destroyed, giant windstorms rage across the Pacific. The Thunderbirds battle against typhoons and tidal waves in order to rescue people trapped on a vacation island resort.

11. **Snowbound.** An explosion avalanche at a mountain resort traps innocent

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Three characters from *Thunderbirds 2086*. Captain Dylan Beyda (left), Captain Kellan James (top right) and Dr. Warren Simpson (bottom right).

vacationers in a monorail tunnel. With all the odds against them, the Thunderbird team use an impeccable plan and highly advanced rescue apparatus to end the vacationers' nightmare.

plants grow to enormous proportions. The Thunderbirds team are called in to save the scientists.

13. **One Of A Kind.** A fire breaks out at a game preserve for genetically engineered experimental animals. The forest rangers call in the Thunderbird team to save valuable relic animals that are trapped by the intensifying fire.

14. **Airport 2086.** An explosion aboard a huge flying airport disables its controls. The Thunderbirds use their rescue vehicles and spacecrafts to prevent the one and a half mile aircraft crashing down into a heavily populated city.

15. **Space Warriors.** A criminal mastermind escapes from a space prison with a deadly spacecraft. His one goal is to avenge the man who is responsible for his imprisonment. Dylan Beyda, pilot of Thunderbird One. The other Thunderbird pilots unite to help Dylan battle this ruthless criminal.

16. **Destination Unknown.** The Thunderbirds are called in to save a famed scientist in a sabotaged spacecraft.

17. **Rendezvous With Destiny.** A giant asteroid is discovered on a collision course with the moon. The Thunderbirds discover that it is really an alien craft sent to steal energy from the sun and return to its own dying solar system.

18. **Greenpeace.** An airline carrying dangerous chemicals crashes into the ocean. The Thunderbirds must save the valuable marine life being bred in a top secret underwater research laboratory.

19. **All That Glitters.** The Thunderbirds uncover a plot to take over the solar system's largest company-Asteroid Mines Inc.

20. **Child's Play.** When two young boys break away from a class trip to International Rescue headquarters and steal aboard Thunderbird 1, they unwittingly start the engines and blast off. In their panic they crash into a skyscraper and raging fire blazes out of control.

21. **Magma.** An underwater volcano triggers off earthquakes and massive tidal waves. The Thunderbirds must stop the volcano from erupting again.

22. **Fear Factor.** The crew of a space research station becomes terrorized when the founding scientist becomes deranged from contamination by space bacteria. The Thunderbird team are called in to overcome the mad scientist and rescue the crew.

23. **Rescue In Space.** Enemies of the World Federation kidnap a group of highly prominent scientists and flee with them into space. It becomes a daring mission for the Thunderbirds.

24. **Countdown To Danger.** A massive explosion aboard an electric generating satellite causes a malfunction in the computer-guidance system of a space school bus. The Thunderbirds rush to the rescue of the defenceless kids before the oxygen runs out.

Future are issuing a clutch of science fiction and fantasy titles this month, among them the first three books in the "Horseclans" series by Robert Adams. Judging by *The Coming of the Horseclans* (£1.75), the first novel in the saga, this is pretty routine stuff set in a future America reduced to barbarism after a nuclear war. Adams writes much better prose than the average heroic fantasy hack, but there's little of originality in the book to recommend it to non-adverts.

A Matter for Men by David Gerrold (£2.95) is also the first book in a series with the overall title *The War Against the Chthor*. It's background is a Earth invaded by huge malevolent purple worms – no kidding – whose favourite diet is human flesh and who can only be killed by burning. Gerrold is a disciple of Robert Heinlein, and this book contains some of the worst facets of his writing – bigoted, opinionated characters, a glorification of militaristic values at their most ruthless, and a xenophobic attitude towards all things non-American. At first there's a hint that the Chthor might not really exist, but Gerrold later implies that the invaders are real. I can't remember when I've read such an obnoxious book – the characters are either sadists, weaslings or sexual perverts, and there's scarcely a trace of real humanity in it. *A Matter for Men* is a wart on the backside of literature.

It was some relief to turn to Joe Haldean, whose *Worlds Apart* (£2.95) interweaves the story of Marianne O'Hara, who lives in an orbital colony, with that of her former lover, Jeff, who is trapped on an Earth yet again devastated by nuclear war and by also a plague which kills people in early adulthood – American writers are

BOOK WORLD

Reviews by Chris Charles

getting very apocalyptic these days. This is the second volume in Haldean's trilogy about space colonies, and I found it an interesting and well-wrought novel which accomplishes much in little over 200 pages. There are some especially memorable scenes on Earth as a plague vaccine is perfected which has to be administered under the guise of a cholera shot, the suspicious survivors having evolved a religion which frowns on old age.

Mythago Wood by Robert Holdstock (Gollancz, £8.95) is a novel developed from an award-winning short story about a stretch of primeval woodland which harbours mythic creatures from the collective unconscious of the human race. The story has a great sense of atmosphere and builds inexorably to a very satisfying climax as the young man, Christian, penetrates the wood in search of his missing brother. This is Holdstock's best novel to date, and the best book by far this month, it's the product of a powerful, individual imagination.

Fire Pattern by Bob Shaw (Gollancz, £7.95) takes as its starting point the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion, the novel being built on an explanation for the effect. Shaw is always an inventive and literate writer, but this story, which involves tele-

pathic transference and a race of humans on Mercury, is rather comic-bookish in the worst sense of being contrived and featuring a pretty stereotype villain. There's little sense that the author was deeply involved in the writing of it.

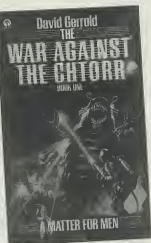
Finally a very belated mention for *Lamia* by Tristan Travis (Star, £2.95). This novel appeared in 1983, and I borrowed John Brossan's copy. It's a big book which combines an occult motif with a police hunt for a mass murderer whose victims are brutally disfigured. We soon discover that the killer is a woman, but this doesn't diminish the suspense one iota. The author spares us no details in his description of the mutilated corpses, and some readers might find his explicitness disgusting; but a tremendous narrative drive compels the reader on even in the face of all the gory details. This is a first-class example of a horror novel which transcends its category by the sheer power of the writing; it's absolutely rivetting stuff.

Other titles from Future this month include novels by Frank Herbert, Alan Dean Foster and the relentless Piers Anthony, whose interminable books continue to infest the paperback shelves and seem popular with fans despite every evidence of them having

been hacked out with a minimum of effort and care. Future's SF list is clearly a populist one, but it's a poor reflection on them that they can't find room for a single British writer in this mini-promotion.

Future's parent company, Macdonald, publish Gregory Benford's new novel *Across the Sea of Suns* at £8.95. Benford is one of the few really ambitious writers still working in the solid heart of science fiction, his stories featuring plausibly extrapolated science in a realistic human setting. This novel is the story of a starship searching for life on other planets of nearby stars while the Earth succumbs (yet again) to alien invasion and war. Benford has only limited natural ability as a writer, but he is inventive and prepared to experiment so that his books are usually triumphs of careful application over the deficiencies of raw talent. *Across the Sea of Suns* is the second book in yet another trilogy, and while the story does plod at times – Benford cannot overcome his basic inability to create vivid characters – overall it's an achievement because it's written with intelligence, ambition and even passion.

Apocalypse is in the air this month, global disaster also forming the backdrop to *The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica* by John Calvin Batchelor (Granada, £3.50). This is a modern-day saga which draws on Norse legends and features the flight of Grim Fiddle and his cohorts from Sweden to Antarctica by boat while the world plunges into barbarism. Batchelor certainly has a large imagination, but too much of the story is reported in synopsis rather than being shown in a dramatic context, with a consequent reduction in narrative imperius. ■



DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

This issue, it seems, is a Ghostbusters Special Edition. And though I'm not here to review films, I just have to say that, for me, Ghostbusters is the film of the year! I was hoping that I could find enough questions about ghost movies and tv shows to make up a special ghostly Data Bank, but it was not to be, m'dears. Another time, eh?

So, on to this month's batch of brain strain...

IT'S FIESTA TIME!

Two readers have asked recently about the various film festivals held around the world, looking for dates and venues. After a bit of research I found that there are so many that I just don't have space to list them all. But for Søren Thomas in Denmark and Jonathan Downey of Todmorden, here's an essential list of relevant movie fests.

The Cannes Fest you've already missed (11-23 May). Likewise Zagreb (animation, 11-15 June). Mysterio (Cortina, Italy, 22-30 June). Filmex (Los Angeles, 5-20 July). Toronto (animation, 13-18 August). Venice (27 August-7 September). Deauville (France, 6-16 September) and Sitges (horror, Spain, 5-13 October).

You might still catch the Brussels Fantasy event (2-10 November) and the now famous Paris Fantasy fest (22-29 November). And then early next year (12-20 January) there's the Avoriaz festival in France. I may have missed a couple, but you've got all the important ones. If you go, send me a postcard!

KUBRICK'S "ORANGE"

Amidst reams of questions from Nick Smith of Croydon there was a query about Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*. Nick wants to know whether the movie is available on video (it's not!) and whether there's any chance of a tv showing (unlikely, I think). The reason for *Clockwork Orange* remaining unseen since its original release is that, as an afterthought, the British censors decided that they wanted further cuts to the already approved version of the film before a re-release would be allowed. Kubrick decided that enough was enough and rather than have his film cut any further,

he would rather it wasn't re-released. Presumably, this ruling applies to the video version and any tv showing of the film. So, unless the censor relents, you've had it! *Starburst* will be running a major feature on *Clockwork Orange* in the new year - Editor). In the meantime, to tide you over, we're printing a colour still from the film. How's that?

SEAN'S MOVIES

Miss D. M. Aldritt writes to me from Wolverhampton to ask if I can supply a filmography for Blade Runner star Sean Young. Tough one, D.M. You've already mentioned 1982's *Blade Runner*, so I don't need to. Then there was *Stripes* (1981), and *Young Doctors in Love* (1982) a rather threadbare comedy picture. And still to come, there's *Dune* (1984), the movie of Frank Herbert's best-selling sci-fi novel, and *Baby* (1984) a Disney effort about a dinosaur in the present day. After that, I'm struggling. But if I've missed any, I'm sure readers will line up to set me straight!

POSTHUMOUS APPEARANCE

Here's an interesting one from Miles Pieri in Oxford. Miles thinks he may have seen a silhouette of Alfred Hitchcock in *Psycho* 2. And Miles is right. At least, I remember seeing that same silhouette, thrown on a wall, in the early part of the film in Norman's bedroom. It was pretty subtle, and most people may have missed it. But check for yourselves. It should be easier to spot in the video version.

TRK TRACKS

Receiving as many questions as I do from *Starburst* readers, it's sometimes amazing that information that seems almost second nature to an old-time fantasy fan like me is still unknown by other (perhaps younger) readers. To prove the point I'll answer a question that's turned up twice this month from Gillian Moore in Maryports and David Price of New Ferry, Merseyside. They want to know whether certain episodes of the tv *Star Trek* were banned in Britain by the BBC. The answer is yes, they certainly were. The episodes in question were *Miri*, which had



scenes of children murdering adults on a planet of youngsters on which maturity was a capital offence. If memory serves, the title character (played by Kim Darby) falls in love with Kirk (who doesn't in *Trek*!). *Miri* was screened once in Britain and then banned.

Then there was the three episodes that were banned outright, with nary a screening between them. *Plato's Stepchildren* had the Enterprise crew under the control of malevolent telepathic aliens. I believe the scenes causing the problems involved some pretty heavy torture and whipping and tv's first inter-racial kiss (Kirk is forced to kiss Uhura under the influence of the aliens). The *Empath* featured a mute girl with the power to share emotions and transmit pain. I couldn't find anything to object to in the paperback version of the story. Did I miss something? *Whom Gods Destroy* had madman Garth planning to rule the Universe via the Enterprise. All were three season stories and I'm pretty sure these episodes will remain banned. However, CIC's Arana label offers a *Trek* double bill of *The Empath/Miri*. The other banned titles may follow on video... let's wait and see.

JAMES R. KIRK?

Still on the subject of *Trek*, two other readers have written to enquire about the recently screened episode *Where No Man Has Gone Before*. Peter Harris of Farnborough and Stephen Wilkins of Reading both spotted a tombstone in the story which bore the legend "James R. Kirk" and want to know if this was a mistake. Now if I remember rightly, where *No Man Has Gone Before* was the second *Trek* pilot after *The Cage* (which was re-cut to become *The Menagerie*). In other words, it was early days for *Trek* and very likely was just a silly error.

BASED ON THE BOOK

I received a request from Grant Gievey that I delve into the film versions that have been made of the novels of best-selling author Kurt Vonnegut. Grant already knows about *Slaughterhouse 5* (which we've printed a still from) So... the first movie from Vonnegut was *Happy Birthday Wanda Jane* (1971) which he wrote the script for. *Slaughterhouse 5* was adapted from the novel but other than that, the man had nothing to do with the film. Then there was a made-for-tv effort, *Between Time and Timbuktu* (1972). The most recent version of Vonnegut material was the still unreleased *Slaughterhouse 5* (1983) which starred Jerry Lewis and Madeleine Kahn which nose-dived in the US. I believe it's available here on video, but as it seems so unpopular, I think you'll have a tough time tracking a copy down. Unless you're obsessed with Vonnegut, I'd give it a miss.

GHOSTLY REMAKE?

Ah, a token Ghost question from Gavin Angus from Dundee. Gavin wants to know if *The Legend of Hell House* (1973) was a remake of *The Haunting* (1963). Easy answer, this one. No! The first was based on Richard Matheson's novel *Hell House* and the second was based on Shirley K Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*. The stories appear similar on the surface (parapsychologists investigate haunted house) but the films (and the books) were markedly different in style. Both recommended, by the way!

Send all your queries to:
**Starburst Data Bank,
Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.**



Inset top: Ace Fintney Farnah Erin Young as she appeared in *Black River* (1902). Top: The famous *Psycho* house from *Psycho* 2 (1983). I couldn't find a picture which showed old Sir Al's famous profile, but this is a great picture of the Bates house, don't you think? Above left: All topped up and ready for ultra-violence, Malcolm McDowell and his droogs in the Milk Bar in *Clockwork Orange* (1971). Above right: Valerie Perrine weighs up the situation in the film adaptation of the film adaptation of *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972).

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